

A
S K E T C H
OF
THE LIFE
OF
ELHANAN WINCHESTER,

PREACHER OF THE
UNIVERSAL RESTORATION,
WITH
A REVIEW OF HIS WRITINGS.

BY
WILLIAM VIDLER.

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A REVIEW OF THE WRITINGS

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ADVERTISEMENT.

TRUTH, both human and divine, has always had the ignorance and prejudices of the bulk of mankind to combat, and the worst of motives have been ascribed to such men as have attempted to enlighten the age in which they live. The subject of these memoirs was pretty well known in the religious world; and among those who pride themselves for orthodoxy, he was as much hated as known; but I doubt not the time will come, when the sublime views of the Divine Character, and the final design of the Divine Conduct which he taught, will be generally received and practically felt among the Professors of Christianity. Then his name will be had in thankful remembrance; in the mean time the following Sketch of his character and labours, may not be unacceptable to such Christians as have enlarged views of the love of God to men, and especially to them who had the pleasure of attending the Ministry of Elhanan Winchester, either in America or England.

WILLIAM VIDLER.

No. 100, Houndsditch,
Oct. 1798.

A SKETCH
OF
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OF
ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

AMONG the many themes which the Scriptures of truth present us with for our instruction, we may reckon that of Biography. Sketches of the lives both of good and bad men abound in the Bible; and, probably, nothing is more useful than the exemplification of virtue and vice in the eminent characters which have gone before us. The sacred writers are impartial in this respect; they do not pretend to exhibit perfect characters. They represent human nature as it really is to be found, even in the best of men. Hence, if faithful Abraham deny his wife, through distrust of the Divine care, it is recorded; or if Moses, the meekest of men, lose the command of his temper, and speak unadvisedly with his lips, it is handed down to posterity by his own pen, as a mortifying instance of human weakness. So in the New Testament, we not only have the treachery of Judas described; but the fearful fall of Peter, and the cowardice of all the disciples, who in

their Master's distress forsook him and fled. This faithfulness of history is one proof, among a multitude of others, of the truth of the Bible; and the manner of biographical memoir there found, is an example worthy of imitation. Human characters are always mixed, there are none so perfectly good as not to have a dark shade in them; and, perhaps, none so entirely bad, as to have no trait of virtue about them. Some good men, indeed, have a kind of evenness, and uniformity of conduct about them; they never drop much below themselves, but at the same time, they never rise to any great elevation; these are apt to criticise with some severity on those who at times rise higher, and fall lower than themselves. The former, in the course of a long life, do their little work with a steady and even pace; while the latter, often by surprizing efforts, do a great work in a few years. The subject of these pages had but a short period allotted him on earth, his work was great, and his abilities suited to it: he laboured with a zeal that has not often been exceeded: he fought a good fight; he kept the sacred deposit which was committed to him; he finished his course with joy, and entered into his rest.

The family of the Winchesters is supposed to have removed from the neighbourhood of Chester, in Old England, about five generations ago to New England. Elhanan Winchester was born at Brooklyn, near Boston, in that country, 1751. His father, to
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the best of my information, was a farmer, and I understand is still living in that employment at Brooklyn. He had thirteen children, mostly sons; I believe Elhanan was one of the younger part of this numerous family. At most places in America, a numerous offspring is counted a blessing, because labour is dear, and land is cheap; and children, brought up in habits of industry, are soon useful in agriculture; so it was found in old Mr. Winchester's family, his children were brought up in creditable labour; and I do not find that he was guilty of the folly and wickedness of bringing up any of his sons to be Ministers, as many do, by which young men are turned out in the world in a sacred character, without having any more acquaintance with Christianity than what a classical education, and a mere knowledge of religious systems can give. Such Ministers can certainly communicate *that* which they possess; but if they have not an experimental acquaintance with Christ, with ardent love to his person, and fervent zeal for his honour, they can never be able Ministers of the New Testament: they will be found incapable of preaching Jesus Christ, and him crucified, to the salvation of men. Notwithstanding this defect, as the world will call it, in the education of his sons, Mr. Winchester had the satisfaction of seeing two of them become useful Ministers of the Gospel; of whom Elhanan was the most eminent. He, and the whole family were brought up not only virtuously,
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but religiously. The profession of the parents was that of *particular*, or *Calvinist Baptists*.

It seems to have been owing to something peculiar in his disposition, that this great propagator and defender of the Universal Doctrine did not learn to read till he was twelve years of age; and at that time he had so ardent a desire for knowledge, that every body who knew him was surprized at his progress; his mind seemed to burst open, like the expansion of a flower in Spring. That there was something untoward in his mind, during his childhood and youth, is clear, for he has several times told me, that he was of so passionate and obstinate a temper, that it was dangerous to contradict or thwart him in any thing; his paroxysms of anger were akin to madness; this is the more remarkable, as in future life he appeared one of the meekest of men.

The first religious impressions that were lasting upon his mind, were received in his nineteenth year. This is a time of life in which the passions run high, and may be deemed therefore peculiarly unfavourable to any thing serious; but I have observed, among my acquaintance in the religious world, that the greater part of real Christians have felt the converting power of truth, before they were twenty years of age; for, notwithstanding the giddiness of youth, they are not yet hardened by habits of vice, nor are there, in general, such fixed prejudices against religion in their minds, as in those of older persons.

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The degree of conviction and guilt which he felt at this time appears to have been considerable; for though he had not been a vicious youth, yet the untractableness of his temper had hurried him into some acts, particularly of disobedience to his parents, the recollection of which was exceedingly painful to him, and he began to experience the truth of this maxim, "*That every fallen creature must feel the bitterness of his own sinful actions.*" It was not long, however, before his soul found liberty, by believing in Christ, and tasted that the Lord was gracious.

His attention to literature since he had learnt to read was as remarkable as his aversion to it had been before, and his progress was surprizing; every thing within his reach he grasped with the greatest eagerness; the Bible, in particular, became the object of his attention, and he began to study it with the utmost diligence. His method was to read the whole of it through regularly, and to mark the connection of one part with another. In this manner he read the Bible through many times in a year. This practice he continued, I believe, through life. I have frequently heard him say, that he had read the Bible more than all other books put together. His strength of memory was uncommon; he seldom heard or read any thing without retaining the substance of it; and from his continual reading and studying the Scriptures, his knowledge of them was perhaps greater than that of any man living. He
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actually had by far the greater part of them in his memory, and could repeat them without hesitation. He would take any historical or prophetic part of Scripture, and repeat every other part relating to it by memory; and if any thing in profane history was connected with it, he would quote it with the same readiness. His knowledge of Scripture doctrines was the same; I do not suppose he possessed this ability in an equal degree in his younger years; but even when he first began to preach, his acquaintance with Scripture was noticed, as being very remarkable. In his twentieth year he married his first wife, by whom he had four children, but two were born dead, and the other two died young, and his wife died in childbed of the last of them.

In his twentieth year also he began his ministry, in his own town and neighbourhood, being called to the work, to the best of my information by a Calvinist Baptist Church, where his family had been used to attend. He did not stay long there, probably finding the words of our Lord true, "that a Prophet hath no honour in his own country, nor in his father's house," though this saying was reversed in his case some years afterwards. He travelled southward in America, preaching as he went with great acceptance, but not being disposed to settle any where. He had imbibed from his early days the principles of Calvinism, and when he began to judge for himself, he thought that scheme the most consistent with it-
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self of any that he had ever heard of: he therefore entered fully into it, and was remarked for his clear conceptions of it, and the masterly way in which he stated and defended it; consequently, wherever he went, the Calvinists of every denomination received him cordially. I believe the first place he settled at was Welch Neck, on the river Pee Dee, in South Carolina, where he appears to have staid some years; often, however, travelling many miles round, preaching wheresoever he came, to the refreshment of his own soul, and the great good of many.

In the year 1778, while he was still at Welch Neck, a friend shewed him that excellent little book called *The Everlasting Gospel*, written originally in German, by Paul Siegvolk, and requested him to tell what the author meant. On looking it over, he found it treated on the *Restitution of all fallen intelligences by Christ Jesus*. He informed his friend of it, and they both concluded that the scheme was benevolent and ingenious; but that it was not true: and Mr. Winchester, for his own part, was resolved not to trouble himself about it, as he was very well satisfied with his own sentiments; so that he did not so much as read the book through, although he had a sight of it again in the course of a year. Notwithstanding he had determined not to think of the subject, yet, some of the arguments which he had glanced on, made an impression on his mind, which he could not get rid of.

In the year 1779 he began to preach in a more open and general manner than he had been used to ; or than is practised by Calvinists at large. Repentance, faith, and obedience to the Gospel, were his usual themes. His heart was greatly opened, and being much impressed with a sense of the worth of souls, he felt much compassion towards them, and was very earnest with his hearers to come to Christ. In order to induce them to this, he displayed before them the love of God, and insisted much upon the power and willingness of the Lord Jesus to save sinners. In this mode of preaching he did not consult that consistency with Calvinist sentiments, which he had formerly done ; but followed the feelings of his mind, which was led into such an experience of divine love as he had never known before ; and as God gave in to him, so did he give out to others. A very happy effect followed this enlargement of his soul ; conviction for sin appeared in many, who before were careless ; and many experienced a change of heart, and were truly converted to God, and it was a time of spiritual refreshment to all real Christians in the neighbourhood. About the same time, he began to find earnest longings for the conversion and salvation of the poor Negro slaves, who were very numerous in that part of the country, and whose abject case had been neglected till that time ; or if any slight attempts had been made for their instruction, the poor creatures, from their heavy bondage, had

had turned a deaf ear to them. Mr. Winchester had freely declared his abhorrence of slavery, and this being pretty generally known, the slaves shewed a disposition to attend his ministry; so that many of them would occasionally come, and stand round about the door of the place of worship. Though he had a strong desire for their welfare, yet he had but little hope of doing them good; but God who had given him a concern for their souls, also found out a way for him to be of use to them. Let us take his own words from preface of second edition of the Dialogues on the Universal Restoration, page 12.—“As yet,” says he, “I had not addressed them in particular: but one evening, seeing a great number of them at the door of the house where I was preaching, I found myself constrained as it were to go to the door, and tell them, That Jesus Christ loved *them*, and died for *them*, as well as for us White people; and that they might come and believe in him, and welcome: and I gave them as warm and pressing an invitation as I could, to comply with the glorious Gospel. This short discourse, directed immediately to *them*, took greater effect than can be well imagined. There were about thirty present from one plantation in the neighbourhood (besides others) these returned home, and did not even give sleep to their eyes, as they afterwards informed me, until they had settled every quarrel among themselves; and, according to their form of marriage, had mar-

ried every man to the woman with whom he lived ; had restored whatever one had unjustly taken from another ; and determined from that time to seek the Lord diligently. From that very evening they began to pray to the Lord, and so continued, and he was found of them. I continued to instruct them, and within three months, I baptized more than thirty blacks belonging to that plantation ; besides as many others as, in the whole, made up one hundred, of which sixty-three were men, and thirty-seven were women : all of which were born in Africa, or immediately descended from such as were born in that unhappy country.

“ My preaching was not useful to the poor slaves only, but also to great numbers of the white people, of whom I baptized upon profession of repentance and faith in Christ, about one hundred and thirty-nine persons. This was a summer of great success ; and I shall remember that happy season with pleasure while I live.”

I believe this to be the beginning of that great work, which Mr. Isaac Backus, of New England, mentions in a letter to Mr. Benjamin Wallin, of London, and a quotation from which may be seen in my Funeral Sermon for Mr. Winchester. It seems, that a few months before this, he had buried his third wife, one of the most pious and amiable of women, and whom he dearly loved ; and had but lately recovered from a severe fever himself, which for many weeks

weeks had every appearance of being fatal to him. In these severe afflictions, he had an experience, which I have heard him mention with the greatest gratitude. He was remarking, that pride was one of the worst and most latent evils of the human heart; that envy was inseparable from pride: that he remembered the time when these evils had an undue influence upon him, in the work of the ministry; and that in proportion as they prevailed in his mind, he was both unsuccessful in the work of God, and also unhappy in it: but that God had cured him, by an heavy dispensation of his providence. For, after his beloved wife was taken away, and he knew not how to submit to the stroke, he was reduced to the lowest ebb of life; in which state he remained for some time, in perfect possession of his senses; but with such a view of his spiritual condition, as astonished and overwhelmed him, and brought him into the deepest abasement of soul. From that time he seemed to have an almost perfect indifference, either to the applause or contempt of men. This was an experience very dearly bought; but the lesson he learnt was an important one, and very necessary to prepare him for that contempt and shame, on the one hand; and applause on the other, which he was to be called to in a future day.

It has but seldom been seen, I believe, that any minister has been very eminently useful, unless some heavy affliction has first passed upon him to open to him

him his own heart, to shew him the necessity of being subdued, humbled, and emptied, that so he may be exalted by grace, and filled with all the fulness of God. For however much we may talk of the depravity of our fallen nature, of the extent and riches of mercy, and of the consolations of God; yet it is only an inward and deep experience of these things that can make us know their reality: it is this alone can give us the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to him that is weary. This the apostle proves in his own case, 1 Cor. i. 4—6.—“The God of all comfort,” says he, “comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God: for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” In order therefore to enter fully into the work of God, and to be *co-workers* with him, see 2 Cor. vi. 1. it is necessary for us, in our measure, to have the same views that God himself has, and the same feelings of heart that our Lord Jesus possesses: for he, in order that he might be a faithful and merciful high priest in things pertaining to God, was made in all things (sin excepted) like unto his brethren. Like them he suffered

fered being tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted. And therefore he can have compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way : for he himself hath been encompassed with infirmities.

In the family and personal affliction before mentioned, Mr. Winchester seems to have been led into deep waters, and to have had such a baptism of the spirit, 1 Cor. 12, 13. as never wholly left him. And though his natural abilities were of the first rate, and his acquirements considerable ; yet he has told me, that the greatest qualifications which he possessed for the ministry were derived from his experience at that time.

Thus, in relation to the kingdom of Christ, it appears, a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from above.

In the summer of the year 1779, during his preaching with such success, he began to have some dawnings of the great day of the restoration of all things upon his mind. Several scriptures were opened to him, as containing a greater extent of grace than he had before conceived of. As, Isa. liii. 11. " He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied ; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify *many* : for he shall bear their iniquities."—And, Rev. 7. 9. " After this I beheld, and lo a *great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before* the

the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed in white robes, and palms in their hands." From these, and other passages of similar import, he concluded that the number of the saved would finally equal, if not exceed, the number of those who would be finally lost. This was a great deal for a Calvinist to believe; and as his heart was at that time filled with love both to God and men, it was a source of joy to him, and he did not scruple to make it known freely both in private conversation, and in preaching.

His congregation at Welch Neck was numerous, consisting, in general, of about a thousand persons; and though they were Calvinists, yet they did not object to this view of divine grace; only some of them, with whom he had conversed about the *general restoration*, thought that he was just going to avow his belief of that doctrine: but that was far from his thoughts; for, as yet, he believed the sentiment of endless misery was a truth.

I know some good men, both Calvinists and Arminians, who go as far as Mr. Winchester had hitherto done, and rejoice as much as he did in it; but their stricter brethren; of the Calvinists especially; blame them much for it, and say they consult their feelings more than truth; as though it could possibly be wrong for a good man to rejoice under the prospect of the greater part of mankind being delivered from darkness, sin, and death; but perhaps they are afraid that such an extensive view of the salvation of
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Christ will lead to something further; but can salvation reach too far, for the tender feeling heart of one who has tasted that God is love? And can such a heart reach further than the love of God, and the grace of Christ?

The progress which the Universal Doctrine made in his mind, seems to have been very slow, and gradual; yet some of its leading thoughts sunk deep into his heart, ever since he first cast his eye over Paul Siegvolk's book. Such as, the inconsistency and impossibility of both good and evil endlessly existing in the universe; and the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words which we render *eternal and everlasting*; which that writer had clearly shewed were applied to things which had a beginning, but would never have an end, as the being and happiness of the righteous; and that they were also applied to things, times, and seasons, which had a beginning, and would have an end. Of this he had given many undeniable instances, and from hence the evidence of endless misery, which is supposed to arise from these words, was invalidated. Mr. Winchester could not help frequently reflecting upon these things, which led him often, when in conversation with ministers, to propose some of the arguments in favour of the Restoration, on purpose to see what answers they could give; but to his surprize, he found their answers in general so feeble, as rather to strengthen his doubts of the truth of endless misery, than to remove

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them. This was not the case with unlearned ministers only, but with others. For instance, he was in habits of intimacy and friendship, with *Dr. Manning, President of Rhode Island College*; a gentleman of learning, good sense and piety. In the course of conversation, one day, he asked the Doctor, What he thought was the strongest argument that he could use in favour of the doctrine of *endless misery*? He answered, "That it was the nature of God, to lay the greatest possible restraint upon sin, and therefore he had threatened it with *endless punishment*, as the highest possible restraint he could lay upon it." There is an inference from the Doctor's words which ought to be taken notice of, viz. That if the threatening of *endless punishment* be taken away (as it certainly is by the doctrine of the Restoration) then the highest possible restraint upon sin would cease, and mankind would become licentious. But let it be observed, that hitherto the preaching of eternal misery to sinners, has not reformed the world; but good men in general say that wickedness abounds more now than ever. What can this be owing to? Certainly not to the want of preaching up endless damnation; for the pulpits of modern gospel ministers abound with it. There is more of damnation to be found in most single sermons now, than can be found in the whole Bible. It should follow from this, that the '*highest possible restraint which God could put on sin,*' hath not answered its end. But perhaps it is not true, that
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the threatening of endless punishment is the highest possible restraint upon sin. Solomon says, ' Because sentence is not executed speedily against an evil work; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' Eccles. viii. 11. It is clear then, that if he that sinneth was immediately cut off by the hand of God, it would be a greater restraint upon sin, than *any* threatening could possibly be. Thus the Doctor's strongest argument for endless punishment falls. It has long appeared to me that mankind do not believe that God will *eternally* punish them for sin, although they hold the sentiment; yet there is hardly one in ten thousand that applies it to himself. They believe that God will punish somebody thus: but not themselves, for let them be ever so wicked, the disproportion between a short life of sin, and endless punishment for it, is so striking, that scarcely any man thinks it can be his own case. Hence I conclude that the opinion of endless misery is false: because it produces a conclusion quite contrary to what was intended by it; for instead of restraining sin, it much oftener lulls men asleep in it. On the contrary, the doctrine of limited punishments, which is included in that of the Restoration, is so conformable to the idea of divine equity, that it forces its way into the mind almost irresistibly, and in its own nature must be a powerful restraint upon sin: because it teaches that every man shall be rewarded according to his works.

Any person who wishes to see the above objection of Dr. Manning answered at large, may consult Mr. Winchester's third dialogue on the Universal Restoration.

In September, 1779, he left South Carolina, intending to visit his friends in New England. He travelled slowly northward, preaching as he went, generally to great congregations. I think it was in this journey through the Continent when * such a remarkable power attended his word, that there was a revival of religion in most places where he preached, and many ministers were greatly quickened in their labours by his means. At this time he was without wife or child, in the world, and his heart seemed given up to the work of God; he often lamented afterwards that he ever changed his state again, as he thought it would have been more agreeable to the will of God, and that he should have been more useful in the cause of Christ, if he had remained a widower. Indeed it was not without reason that he repented his last marriage, as it was a very unhappy one, and I doubt not but the severe trials of it hastened his death.

The Universal Doctrine appeared now in another valuable point of light to him. He saw that it would reconcile the difficulties of other systems, and give a freedom and consistency in preaching the Gospel,

* See my Funeral Sermon for Mr. Winchester, page 40.
which

which no other scheme could do. Freedom and consistency are very desirable things in public preaching ; but it is very evident that they cannot be both obtained on either the Calvinist or Arminian plan ; if the Arminian preach with freedom and declare good news to all mankind, he must inconsistently maintain the inefficacy of the blood of atonement towards millions for whom it was shed, and the final failure of the divine purpose towards millions, whom God meant to save. While the Calvinist, if he preach consistently, and shew the accomplishment of God's purposes, and the efficacy of the blood of Christ in the salvation of the elect, yet cannot preach with freedom ; for as he believes divine mercy made provision only for a few, how can he dare to mock the miseries of mankind, by exhorting all to repent and believe the Gospel ? There are many good men of both these parties of Christians, who are painfully struggling with their situation, and can never obtain freedom and consistency too in their ministrations. If the Universal Doctrine was of no other use but to relieve such ministers from their embarrassment, and put them in possession of liberty and consistency in their public labours, I should esteem it highly valuable.

This view of the Doctrine was afterwards fully reduced to practice by him, and to it was owing that pleasing freedom and perspicuity with which he was observed to treat the most difficult Scriptures, the
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sense of which had been long contested betwixt the Calvinists and Arminians.

The effect which these views of the extent of Divine grace had upon his mind, even before he professed the Restoration, we will express in his own words. 'The ideas were sometimes so transporting to me, that I have been constrained to set them forth in the most sublime manner that I was able; and sometimes so as actually to bring them who heard me converse upon the subject, to believe and rejoice in the Universal Restoration, while I was only proposing the arguments in its favour to see what effect they would have on such who never heard them before. And I was often carried away before I was aware, even while I only intended to let my friends hear what might be said. I remember once, while I was at my father's table, in the year 1780, that I mentioned the doctrine of the Restoration, and finding that none in company had ever so much as heard of it; I produced many arguments in its favour, brought up many objections, answered them in such a manner as astonished all present, and I was amazed at myself, I spoke with so much ease and readiness as I had hardly ever experienced before on any occasion. Nay I was so much animated with the subject, that I said, I did not doubt but in sixty years time, that very doctrine would universally be preached, and generally be embraced in New England, and would certainly prevail over all opposition.' It appears

pears that this discourse made a greater impression both upon his own mind and upon those who heard him, than he intended, at that time. He spent near a year in travelling from South Carolina to New England, and in staying at his father's house, and during his abode there he preached in his native place, and all around the neighbourhood, to great multitudes of people. A remarkable power at this time attended his ministry, and his own heart was filled with a sense of divine love, which led him out in a most affectionate way in his addresses, both to professors and men of the world, and he had the happiness of seeing many of his old acquaintance and play-fellows brought to an experimental knowledge of Christ.

He now began his journey back again to South Carolina, intending to have returned to his people at Welch Neck; but Providence disposed of him otherwise, and it does not appear that he ever saw them again. In going southward, he visited *Mr. Samuel Waldo*, a minister in Pawling's Precinct, State of New York, whose character he highly esteemed. While he was with that gentleman, several religious persons who were on a journey came to the house, and having heard something about the Universal Doctrine, they requested Mr. Winchester to bring forward all he could say upon the subject: accordingly he gave them some of the principal arguments in its favour, and obviated some of the most capital objections that could

could be brought against it. He says, that he overheard them afterwards, wishing that they had not been so curious as to have enquired into the subject; for they owned they could not resist the arguments; yet they seemed resolved to treat the sentiment as an error. I have reason to believe that many now in this country, are in the same state of mind with these good men, seeing so much of the truth of the Doctrine, that they dare not contradict it; but yet through interest, or idleness, do not come forward to avow it. We leave such to the reproofs of their own conscience, and to the mercy of God, and go on to observe, that Mr. Winchester arrived at Philadelphia, on the 7th of October, 1780, intending to leave that city in a few days; but the Baptist Church there being destitute of a minister, he was solicited to stop with them, which, after some consideration, he agreed to. In his own mind, he was in great part persuaded of the truth of the Restoration; but as yet he had not mentioned it in public, nor does it appear that he had any design of so doing; and it is probable, that if circumstances in Providence had not led him on, he might never have borne any public testimony to it at all. When he came to Philadelphia he was greatly followed, and the congregation increased so much, that the Baptist Meeting-house, though large, was not big enough to contain them. He preached frequently in the church of St. Paul's, in that city, which is a very spacious building, I believe it to be
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the largest in Philadelphia, it was generally very full. He continued for about twelve months in great popularity there, being very highly esteemed; but the time of his reproach and rejection now drew nigh. Popularity is always a dangerous thing to a minister, and Mr. Winchester's change of sentiment has been ascribed to intoxication of mind, through his being so much carested; but from what has been observed before, it will be seen that he had long been thinking of the subject, though not as yet fully satisfied; but the ill services of some false friends eventually brought his mind to a determination. There are in all religious societies, in general, certain persons, whose employment is, not to work out their own salvation; much less to assist others to do so; but to act as spies upon their brethren: to exaggerate foibles into faults, and faults into enormities, and then, by private whispering, or public accusation, to stir up strife; blast the character of individuals, and break the peace of churches. These are generally looked upon as the most *orthodox* men; the great guardians and preservers of truth. It seems that Mr. Winchester found some of this character at Philadelphia, who very undesignedly hastened him forward to avow the Universal Doctrine. Some time after his arrival in that city, he enquired for Paul Siegvold's Everlasting Gospel, which he could not immediately get; however, he found *Stonehouse on the Resitution of all Things*, this very learned work he had never

seen or heard of before ; he read it with great attention, and according to his usual way ; through the retention of his memory, soon became master of its leading arguments. The friends who procured him *Stonehouse*, expressed some concern that he should read any thing upon such a subject ; but notwithstanding he had conversed very freely with them, they had fidelity enough not to mention it to any others. This was not the case with some with whom he talked with less freedom, only expressing his views in Scripture language, thus : That he could not help hoping *that God would finally bring every knee to bow to him, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue to confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father :* and that he hoped, *in the dispensation of the fulness of times, God would gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, &c.* Such passages he would often mention, expressing his hope that in due time they would be fulfilled, and as he repeated such Scriptures with apparent satisfaction, he was asked whether he really believed this ; to which he replied, that sometimes he could not help hoping that it might be so. Who would have supposed, that expressing a hope that the Scriptures were true, would be deemed a crime among *Christians* ; yet so it was ! These narrow hearted professors went and told a *minister*, that Mr. Winchester was become a heretic, and believed the Restitution of
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all Things: and desired him to come and convince him of his error. This *minister* had for many years been in habits of intimacy with him, and had been looked on by him, as one of his most hearty friends, consequently he had a right to expect both *faithfulness* and *affection* from him. This gentleman meeting Mr. Winchester in the street, accosted him thus: ‘ I have wanted to see you for some time, that I might tell you a piece of my mind; I have been informed by ———, that you are inclined to the doctrine of the Universal Restoration; if you embrace this sentiment, I shall no longer own you as a brother.’ With this laconic speech he left him, never taking any pains to convince him that he was in an error. And it appears this *friend* was as good as his word, for he never spoke, or wrote to Mr. Winchester afterwards; and even when they met by accident, refused to shake hands with him. I write this account with peculiar sensations, having met with a treatment exactly similar, for the same cause. Surely, if the Universal Doctrine be an error, there are more rational methods of proving it to be so, than these; yet the strongest arguments which I have ever met with against it, have been *contempt*, *slander*, and *reproach*, even from old and professed friends.

Mr. Winchester is, to this day, greatly blamed by some Calvinist ministers in London for his conduct at Philadelphia. Much as I respect his memory, I do not suppose him to have been without the in-

firmities of human nature. And when I consider the peculiar situation in which he was placed, and the many trials he was exposed to, from the treatment he met with, I must think him something more than man, if he did not discover some infirmity at that time. I say this, not from a conviction that he did any thing at that time particularly wrong; but as an allowance that universal human nature calls for, in circumstances of difficulty. For where is that wise and good man, who has passed through heavy trials, and suffered public odium for conscience sake, when he looks back upon his actions, can say, I have nothing in which to blame myself? I have conversed with some of those ministers who blame him most, and can find no circumstance attending the avowal of his sentiments that can attach the smallest immorality to his character. As this period of his life is an important one, I will give the account of it in his own words.

“ I now, says he, foresaw the storm, and I determined to prepare for it, not by denying what I had said; but by examining and determining for myself, whether the sentiment was according to Scripture or not. If I found that it was not, I determined to retract; but if it was, to hold it fast, let the consequences be what they might. I had now no time to lose, I expected in a short time to be called to an account, and examined respecting this doctrine, and obliged either to *defend* or *deny* it; I was already

ready too well persuaded that it was true, to do the latter without hesitation, and yet not sufficiently for the former. For this purpose I shut myself up chiefly in my chamber, read the Scriptures, and prayed to God to lead me into all truth, and not to suffer me to embrace any error; and I think that with an upright mind, I laid myself open to believe whatever the Lord had revealed. It would be too long to tell all the teachings I had on this head; let it suffice, in short, to say, that I became so well persuaded of the truth of the *Universal Restoration*, that I was determined never to deny it, let it cost me ever so much, though all my numerous friends should forsake me, as I expected they would, and though I should be driven from men, and obliged to dwell in caves or dens of the earth, and feed on wild roots and vegetables, and suffer the loss of all things, friends, wealth, fame, health, character, and even life itself. The truth appeared to me more valuable than all things, and as I had found it, I was determined never to part with it, let what would be offered in exchange.

“ I had now formed my resolution, and was determined how to act when the trial came. Hitherto I had said nothing about the Restoration in public, and but little in private; but I preached up the death of Christ, and salvation for mankind through him, without restriction. This free manner of preaching gave offence to some, who came to hear me no more. On
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the evening of the twenty second of January 1781, a number of the members of the church, who had heard that I held the doctrine of the Restoration, met me at a friend's house, to ask me the question, whether I did or did not? I acknowledged that I did, but did not wish to trouble any body with my sentiments. They desired me neither to preach them in public, nor to converse of them in private. I told them, that if they would prevent people from asking me, I would say nothing upon the matter; but if I was asked concerning my sentiments, I could not deny them, and if they wished to know the reasons, I must inform them. And thus the matter was to rest; but some that were present, wished to know the foundation of my sentiments, others opposed it, not wishing to hear any thing in its favour. At length it was agreed that I might read the passages of Scripture, upon which I judged the doctrine of the Restoration to be founded; but must not add a single word of explanation on my part; and on their parts they were not to ask any questions, or make the least opposition; if they did I insisted upon the liberty of defending. Accordingly I took the Bible, and read many passages in the Old and New Testaments, which I judged to contain the doctrine; and the very reading of them convinced several of the company of the truth of the Restoration. There was nothing farther took place at that time: we parted with a mutual agreement: I was not to preach it

it in the pulpit, nor to introduce it in conversation ; but I would not be obliged to deny it when asked, nor refused to vindicate it, if opposed ; and on their parts, they were not to speak of it to my prejudice, but to endeavour as much as possible, to keep the matter close. But notwithstanding all the pains that could be taken, the circumstance got abroad, and several came to discourse with me on my principles, to whom I gave such reasons as I was able, for what I believed. A little after this I met with another copy of the EVERLASTING GOSPEL, which I then read through with attention, for the first time, and found much satisfaction ; the arguments and the Scripture proofs therein contained, seemed to me sufficient to convince all that would read with candour and attention.

“ I still continued to act only on the defensive, not preaching upon the subject, nor going about to private houses to make interest in my favour ; but if any came to me to discourse upon it, I would not refuse ; and thus a number were convinced of its truth, while others violently opposed it. And thus matters continued until the latter end of March. Having heard that the German Baptists in *German-town*, about eight miles from Philadelphia, held the doctrine of the Restoration, I had appointed to spend the first Sunday with them ; and this engagement had been made some time. Just as I was ready to go out of the city on Saturday, I found that some of the
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members of the church had privately sent into the country, and collected a number of the ablest ministers, who were arrived in the city on purpose to debate with me, and to confute me publicly. I gave them the liberty of my pulpit as they pleased for the next day, and went out of the city to go to *German-town*; and took that opportunity to go and visit that ancient, venerable, and excellent man, Dr. George De Benneville, who received me in the most kind, open, and friendly manner: and his conversation was most highly edifying to me. Afterwards I went to *Germantown*, and lodged there all night, ready to preach the next day. As soon as my enemies in Philadelphia found that I was gone out of the city, they spread a report, that I had fled to avoid an interview with these ministers, who had come on purpose to convince me. Nothing could have been more false than such a report, for I had been engaged to go to *Germantown*, on that day, for several weeks before hand: I knew nothing of these ministers being sent for until they came to town: and I had no fear but I should be able, by God's assistance, to defend the cause before them: and besides, I had appointed to return on Monday, and did return accordingly. The whole church met, both my friends and my opposers, and these ministers met with them. I was called to attend a funeral at that time, and was at the house of mourning, when a messenger was sent in haste, to desire my immediate attendance at
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the meeting without any delay. I found that those who were my enemies in the assembly, had been greatly vaunting over my friends, because I was not present. They said that I had absconded merely to avoid a debate, in which I was sure to be confuted, as here was an opportunity that might never present itself again; and seven wise, able, and learned ministers had assembled on purpose to dispute with me; but that I had gone and left my adherents in the lurch, from a consciousness that I was not able to defend my cause; with abundance more to the same purpose. My friends, on the other hand, told them, That I was afraid of nothing but sin, and that they doubted not of my being able and willing to dispute with any one of the gentlemen, or all of them, one by one, if they chose it. Oh, no! they replied, they knew better than that: I was gone out of the way on purpose, where I could not be found. My friends told them, That if there was a vote passed in the assembly, that I should dispute with any one, they would engage that I should be among them in a few minutes. It was accordingly unanimously voted, that I should dispute with the reverend Mr. Boggs, upon my sentiments, in the presence of these ministers, and of the whole assembly. But when in a few minutes I came in, and took my place, what different faces appeared in the congregation! All my friends were highly pleased, and the others were as much confounded and disappointed, at seeing me

come in so cheerfully and quickly, after they had made themselves so sure, that I would not come. But surely, I might have been looked upon with pity; alone to answer for myself, no one to support me; while my antagonists were seven of the ablest ministers that could be obtained. I felt, however, that inward composure, from a consciousness of having acted uprightly and sincerely in the whole affair, that even caused my countenance to appear easy and cheerful.

“The vote was then publicly read, and I stood up, and declared my readiness to comply with what was required. The worthy gentleman who was chosen to dispute with me, then rose up, and said these words. “I am not prepared to dispute with Mr. “Winchester, I have heard that he says, that it would “take six weeks to canvass all the arguments fairly “on both sides; and I suppose that he has been “studying upon the subject for a week or more, and “I have not studied it at all; and therefore I must “beg to be excused.”

“When I found that, and all the rest wholly declined disputing with me, I begged liberty to speak for two hours upon my sentiments, and to lay them fairly open, and the ground upon which I maintained them. But this was denied me; I then desired them to give me one hour for this purpose; but this was also refused. One of the ministers got up, and said, That their business was not to debate with me; but

but to ask me, whether I believed the restoration of bad men and angels, finally to a state of holiness and happiness, &c.

“ But if they did not come to dispute with me, why was the vote passed by their party, as well as by my friends, that I should dispute with them ? This speaks for itself.

“ The ministers insisted upon putting the question to me, *Do you believe the Doctrine of the Universal Restoration?* My friends objected to my answering the question, unless I might be allowed to vindicate my sentiments. But I said, that I did not fear any use that could be made of my words ; that I had always freely confessed what my thoughts were, when asked ; and therefore I told them, that I did heartily believe the *Universal Restoration*, and was willing to defend it. The gentleman who was chosen to dispute with me, then asked me, “ Whether I thought it strange, considering my change of sentiments, that there should be such a noise and uproar made upon the occasion ? ” I told him I did not think it strange at all ; and gave him a little history of the affair ; and how the matter came abroad, through the treachery of some whom I had esteemed as my friends ; that when I mentioned it to them I was not fully persuaded of it myself, and perhaps might never have been, if I had not been opposed and threatened ; that I never had intended to trouble the people with my sentiments, but was willing to live and die with them, if

they could bear with me ; but that I could not use such deceit, as to deny what I believed, when asked by any one ; that I never had yet done so, and by the grace of God never would, let the consequences be what they might. What I said was in the presence of all my accusers, and none of them could contradict me, nor had aught to lay to my charge, except in this matter of the gospel of my Saviour. My discourse took such an effect upon him, that he then publicly declared, that my behaviour in the whole affair had been as became a *Man* and a *Christian*, and that no one could accuse me of any improper conduct. I stood some time, and as none appeared to have any thing farther to say to me, I took my leave and went out. He accompanied me to the door, and told me he would write to me upon the subject ; but whatever was the reason, he never did, nor have we spoken together since.

The ministers then advised the people to get another minister, but my friends being numerous, insisted it should be fairly determined by the subscribers at large ; this the other party would not agree to. Several very fair offers were made by my friends to them, but they refused them all ; and finally, by force, they kept us out of the house, and deprived us of our part of the property, which was at last confirmed to them by law, though I think unjustly, as we were the majority at first ; but they took uncommon pains in carrying about a *protest* against me, to every

every member of the church, both in the city and in the country, and threatening all with *excommunication* who would not sign it; by which some were intimidated, and by these and other means they strengthened their party. But on the other hand, I took no pains either to profelyte people to believe my sentiments, or to make my party strong. I believe near an hundred of the members suffered themselves to be excommunicated rather than sign the protest against me, and the doctrine which I preached. ^{had}

“When we were deprived of our house of worship, the *Trustees of the University* gave us the liberty of their *Hall*, where we quietly worshipped God for about four years, until we purchased a place for ourselves.—But to return. After this meeting of the ministers, the whole affair was open, and I found myself obliged to vindicate the doctrine which they had condemned unheard, not only in private, but in public. Accordingly, on the twenty-second day of April, I preached a sermon on Gen. iii. 15, in which I openly asserted the doctrine of the *final restoration* of all fallen intelligences. This was published by particular desire, with a list of the plainest scripture passages in favour of the doctrine; and a number of the most common and principal objections, fairly stated, and answered. This was my first appearance in the world as a prose writer, which was what I never expected to be, and probably should never have been, but for this occasion; still less a writer of *controversy*, to which I had naturally a great aversion.”

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In the above transaction, Mr. Wincheſter appears like an honeſt man, poſſeſſing his ſoul in patience, in the miſt of oppoſition and contumely. Among ſome men, however, patience, meekneſs, and love, go for nothing. Nay, there are profeſſors of the goſpel who ſeem to think them rather as marks of *heresy*, than as characters of the diſciples of the meek and lowly Jeſus. I once heard a reſpectable *orthodox* miniſter preach to a large audience of *orthodox* hearers; who had juſt before excluded a miniſter from their body, for holding the *damnable heresy* of the *reſtoration*; and after deſcribing the deadly evil of the ſentiment,—he ſaid, that ſome men who had embraced it, were really *holy* men! ‘Wonder not at this, my brethren,’ continued the preacher, ‘for *heretics* are often the *holieſt* of men.’ If this deſcription of a heretic be true, the Apoſtle was much miſtaken when he ſaid, “a heretic ſinneth, is ſubverted, and ſelf-condemned.” The fact is, that in the Apoſtle’s account, no honeſt upright Chriſtian was a heretic, though ſuch an one might be in an error; but in modern account every man is an heretic, who differs from the majority.

Notwithſtanding the odium which Mr. Wincheſter was under at Philadelphia, he perſeверed, and roſe ſuperior to the difficulties of his ſituation, and continued to preach both with reſpect, and ſucceſs. On the fourth of January, 1782, he preached the ſermon called the *Outcaſts comforted*, which was afterwards

wards printed. The intention of it was to comfort his friends who had been excommunicated for their attachment to the universal doctrine; and it is well calculated for the purpose.

Whether he preached any where else but at Philadelphia, during his stay in that city afterward, I do not know, but it appears the doctrine spread in America; for in his *preface* to the second edition of his *Dialogues on the Universal Restoration*, which was published in London in 1792. He says, "In America, where I once stood almost alone in the Universal Doctrine; there are now many *ministers* who testify this gospel of the free grace of God, and they have formed a connection of their societies, who meet yearly by their representatives, at Philadelphia. In the same *preface* also he expressed a hope of seeing an union of the same kind among the ministers and churches of the *universal* persuasion in England; but he did not live to see this desirable event.

During his stay at Philadelphia, he published, also, two or three other sermons and tracts, which, together with the above mentioned ones, found their way to London, where they were received very differently by different persons. Several of the Baptist Calvinist ministers, who had heard of his former success in his public labours, greatly lamented his *fall*, as they affected to call it. Some of the more rigid of them *foretold* his fate with great confidence, say-

ing, That God would cut him off from the earth in a few months, by some awful judgment. Others, That God would preserve his life, but would bring him to poverty, contempt, and reproach; would make him an outcast upon earth, as an example to all who should afterwards depart from the *truth*, i. e. *Calvinism*. Thus did these discerning men, and judges of the world, determine his condition. Some in America were not behind in their prophecies of evil concerning him. One of his old friends in particular, was very severe, and addressed himself to Mr. Winchester in the following words: ‘Mind what I tell you. In six months from this time, you will turn *Deist*, and deny all revealed religion: and in twelve months you will turn *Atheist*, deny the being of God, and abandon yourself to all kinds of open wickedness.’ I do not mention these instances of religious madness to reflect on any party of Christians, but merely to expose an improper and wicked spirit, let it be found wherever it may. If I was to see any thing of a similar nature among the Universalists, I would expose it in the same manner. Before this period, there had been several witnesses to the Universal doctrine in England, and even some in the last century; but as yet, there was no congregation that openly professed it. However, there were a few thinking, retired Christians of that sentiment, who used to meet in a private room in London, and search the Scriptures, and explain them to each other,

other, among was Mr. John Cue, a gentleman of extensive acquaintance with the original scriptures; and Mr. Richard Clarke, late Rector of St. Phillip's, Charlestown, South Carolina, and afterwards Lecturer at Stoke Newington, near London: this gentleman is a polite scholar, well read in the classics, but particularly acquainted with the oriental languages. His writings in defence of the Restoration (many of which are now out of print) are in considerable estimation in the learned world: The late Dr. Edward Young, author of the Night Thoughts, and the late learned Bishop Newton, author of Dissertations on the Prophecies which have been fulfilled, particularly recommended several of them. There was also a Mr. Edmond Clegg, author of An Essay upon the two Witnesses spoken of in the Revelations, and an address to Calvinists and Arminians respecting the doctrine of Election. He was a person of great natural abilities, and a very good speaker. These, with a few others, used to meet in a large room near Shoreditch Church. Mr. Cue, abovementioned, has just now furnished me with some particulars relative to this original society of Universalists in England, which as it is somewhat curious, I will here insert. They began to assemble about the year 1778. Among them persons of all sentiments and persuasions had free access, and full liberty to controvert any of their opinions, if they thought proper; meetings for this purpose were held every Tuesday evening. These

were sometimes pretty numerously attended, and several clergymen of the Establishment as well as Dissenting Ministers, were often present: some of whom would oppose, while others would defend the Restoration. In this manner the doctrine began to be known and talked of. This society had also their meetings for *worship* on the Lord's day, of a more private nature, in a small room near Moorfields. Their worship usually began with singing, prayer and reading the scriptures, then followed an invitation to any person present either to explain what had been read, or to make any enquiry respecting any point in theology. The subjects commonly attended to were, doctrinal, experimental, and practical christianity; the harmony of the Old and New Testaments; the Law, with its various types and shadows, as fulfilled in Christ; Prophecies of the Old Testament, compared with the history of their fulfilment in the sufferings of Christ and the following glory; the connection between Universal Restoration and particular personal election: also the perfect and compleat atonement for the sin of the whole world, which Christ finished upon the cross, as, connected with future rewards and punishments; the distinction between the Millenium, and the New Heavens and New Earth; the proper and separate idea given in the original Scriptures, of words which convey the perpetuity of the Divine existence, and those which set forth the limitation of all future punishment. Their
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numbers being rather increased, they attempted to get a larger place to meet in, but as nothing offered, Mr. Clegg opened his own house for that purpose, where they met till the year 1783, when Mr. Clegg was invited to America, to superintend a manufactory. When he left the society, he went first to Ireland, where he staid some weeks, taking his son Richard with him, concerning whose remarkable Providential deliverance, see the Universalist's Miscellany for 1797, No. X. page 452. While Mr. C. was in Ireland, Mr. R. Clarke re-published *The Outcast Comforted*. By this piece, the society first heard of Mr. Winchester as a Universalist, and immediately gave Mr. Clegg information of it. It was in consequence of this that when he arrived in Philadelphia, he called upon Mr. W., who very cordially received him, and by his request, Mr. C. preached for him the first evening of his arrival in that city. Mr. C. died about a year after his arrival in America—his death was occasioned by breaking a blood vessel. He expired in Mr. Winchester's arms, full of faith, love, and joy, in possession of which he had long lived.

But to return to Mr. Winchester. I believe he married his last wife in the year 1784, a circumstance which he lamented all the days of his life, as the great unhappiness of her temper, was ever afterward a source of perpetual disquiet to him.

I have been often asked by his opponents, 'Why did he come to England?' And have heard some

wish, that the ship which brought him had been swallowed up in the great deep before it had touched our shore. The wish is wicked, and the question impertinent. Doubtless he had a right to go to any place where he thought his duty called him. I believe that he came to this island because Providence had a great work for him to do.

It is true he had no invitation from any man, nor any acquaintance, or even correspondence with any person here; though he had heard that there were Universalists here, by means of Mr. Clegg. He knew also the common prejudice of mankind in this country, against his peculiar views of the Gospel, so that he could have no prospect of emolument. But he has told me, that for some years he had a strong impression on his mind that he ought to come to England, and that he had a message to deliver here. However, no way seemed to open to enable him to come, yet the impression continued and grew stronger, till at last he thought he could not be in the way of duty if he did not come immediately. He therefore told his congregation at Philadelphia the state of his mind, and added, that he should take his passage immediately for London, which he did the same hour, and in forty eight hours after, the ship sailed. His friends, who much respected him, were surprized, and some of them much grieved, but they shewed their affection to him by making such provision for him and his wife, in the voyage, as the shortness of the time

time would permit. It is natural to suppose that many blamed him for the apparent hastiness of his conduct, but he was satisfied that he was doing the will of God.

He arrived in London September 1787, on the 29th day of that month. He was a stranger in a strange land. Without acquaintance, without connection, without money; and in the eyes of the professors of Christianity in general, without character. If the evils which his enemies had foretold should come upon him, were true, now appeared the time for their fulfilment.

Richard Clegg, before mentioned, had a brother in London, named John, who was a member of the Universalists' Society. To him he sent a letter with the following lines in it. "Mr. Elhanan Winchester, the bearer of this, a gentleman of distinguished piety, and a particular friend of our late dear parent, I wish to introduce to you, and to all our friends; and would have you cultivate his acquaintance, as I believe you will receive great pleasure from the conversation of a person of his abilities." This was all the recommendation he had.

His reception in England was very cold and discouraging at first, except by Mr. Cue, Mr. Bicknell, master of a large boarding-school at Ponder's End, and one or two more, who were Universalists, and who exerted themselves to the utmost to get a place for him to preach in. The first place which offered

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was the Baptist Meeting-house, in Black's-fields, Southwark, where he preached twice: the last sermon was to recommend a charity-school. Then at the late Mr. Maxfield's Meeting, Moorfields, two or three times. But these places were soon shut against him on account of his sentiments. His friends, the number of whom was now somewhat increased, took a large school-room in Store-street, Tottenham-court Road. He preached also at Mr. Thwaite's Chapel, in the Borough. In this latter place he began to deliver his *Course of Lectures on the Prophecies which remain to be fulfilled*. These were afterwards delivered at Glasshouse-Yard also. It seems the plan of this valuable work was formed, and the work itself digested, before he left America. And to deliver these Lectures in London, I have always thought was his great inducement for coming here. No doubt but London is, on several accounts, the most proper place on the globe for the dissemination of religious truth; and I think it a happiness to the world, that our deceased friend made this important work public in this great city.

In the year 1788 he preached at the Meeting-house in Worship-Street, on a Sunday morning, and at Glas-House Yard in the evening, at which places he continued to labour with great acceptance till the Chapel in Parliament-Court was taken for him, where, though the Chapel is not a small one, yet it was in
general

general too small for the congregation. Thus did his faith triumph over difficulties.

As he came to England under the most discouraging circumstances, it is with pleasure that I mention the great acceptance which he almost universally met with wherever he went. No doubt but the novelty of the doctrine which he taught had some influence on his popularity ; but independent of that, he certainly possessed uncommon gifts as a preacher. His memory, which was retentive above that of almost every other man, was united with great depth of judgment and sprightliness of imagination, so that whatever he had read which could illustrate his subject, he would repeat it with the greatest ease and correctness. But three things above all others made his public labours and his conversation acceptable ; he possessed an extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, and a most fervent piety towards God. These, with an habitual cheerfulness of temper, were always evident in his deportment.

Many persons have an idea that he could preach on no other subject but the Restoration ; but those who constantly attended his ministry know the vast variety of themes on which he used to treat ; experimental and practical subjects especially were his delight ; and the reason why he so frequently treated on the Universal Doctrine was not owing to choice, but arose from the necessity of circumstances. There was no other person who publicly, and with the same perspicuity

perspicuity was able to state and defend it: for though the doctrine was believed, and well understood by several before he came to England, as appears by the account of the Universalists before given; yet there generally, among all the professors of it, was a degree of *obscurity* in the statement of it, which hindered its progress. The evidence was mostly brought from the types and figures of the Law, which, though they certainly teach the universality and final efficacy of Divine Love, yet do by no means contain the full evidence of it; nor, perhaps, are they calculated to convey much conviction to the minds of Christians. The wisdom of the Divine conduct ought to be here observed, in giving that degree of light to some serious minds, which enabled them to receive and hold fast the truth, and in their degree to bear their testimony to it, till a proper time should arrive for its more clear developement and publication. The doctrines, "That God will have *all men* to be restored and come to the knowledge of the truth, and that Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for *all men*," are said by the Apostle to be for a testimony in due season: literally, a testimony for its *own time*. That is, I conceive, a time fit and suitable for it. There was a great fitness in the time of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Jews had rejected the offers of salvation, and put many false glosses both upon the Law and the Prophets, and though their own Scriptures contained many prophecies of the calling of the Gentiles, yet they understood

understood them not; but thought it great wickedness in the Apostles, who preached to the Gentiles that they might be saved; and Paul says that this mystery was kept hid in God from ages and generations that were passed, but was manifested to the Apostles *by the scriptures of the Prophets*. So is there a great fitness in the clear publication of the Restitution of All Things by Christ Jesus, in the present time, or age of the church. It is evident that hitherto, since the Reformation, there has been no unity of spirit, nor agreement of sentiment, among the professors of christianity. They have been, and are yet, divided into two great bodies, who have carried on fierce disputes about the extent of divine love, and the death of Christ. In England, one party has produced a Whitfield, the other a Westley. The first has brought forward a Watts, with his 'Ruin and Recovery of Man;' the other a Fletcher, with his 'Scripture Scales.' I do not mention a multitude of other writers on both sides, whose zeal for sentiment has been marked with rage, and who have descended from the cool and sober disquisition of principles, to personal invective, and defamation of character; by which christianity itself has suffered, and has been degraded in the eyes of the world. Unthinking professors on both sides, have a supreme contempt for each other. Candid and serious minds have given up the controversy as endless and hopeless, and sit down with a *part of the scriptures only* in their possession, not being able to

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understand the rest. The result of every thing is, that a path is prepared for infidelity, which is coming in as an overwhelming flood, nor is it possible for Calvinism or Arminianism effectually to withstand it, as neither of these systems embrace the whole of revelation. Nothing but the full display of grace to *all men* in Christ Jesus,—nothing but the sovereign discovery of the character of the ‘living God, as the *restorer of all men*, but especially of those that believe,’ can suit the wants of the present day.

Mr. Winchester was so fully persuaded of the utility of the Universal Doctrine in uniting the jarring sentiments of Christians, and withstanding infidelity by harmonizing the scriptures, that he frequently insisted upon this point both in public and private, and greatly wished to impress it upon the minds of all his friends. During the time he resided in London he usually spent three months in preaching in the country, generally to large congregations. The places which he seemed to visit with most pleasure, were Chatham, Birmingham, Wisbeach, and Fleet in Lincolnshire, at each of which places there were many truly pious and amiable persons, who were by the deep leading of the Holy Spirit brought into the temper of *love*, and thereby prepared for the full doctrine of it, which they received with great cordiality and meekness as soon as they heard the evidence of its truth, from his writings or preaching. I doubt not but there are many others in this country who
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are in the same state of preparation for the doctrine. A few months before his unexpected departure from England, he proposed a plan to me which had for some time occupied his mind, and which, had he remained a few months longer, would have been carried into execution. He had long laboured alone, and when I came forward and avowed the Universal Doctrine, his views of future usefulness seemed to be revived; and he thought he should have opportunity to go to many more places in the country, to carry the good news of universal love. He therefore proposed that I should supply his place at Parliament Court Chapel, while he travelled and preached from place to place, and then that he should stop a few weeks in London, and I should travel; and so keep on. By his sudden removal, this excellent plan was frustrated, and I am left as it were alone, and the odium which so abundantly was poured upon him, has in some measure alighted upon me; nevertheless, I am not without hope of seeing the plan carried into execution, when God shall raise up help sufficient; which I hope is not far distant.

It now remains that something be said of the cause of his leaving England, which, as it was not generally known, has by different persons been attributed to various causes; but the real reason was known to his friends, who, though they lamented the circumstance, yet they universally acquitted him of all *moral* blame. He was ever remarkable for his attention

to Mrs. Wincheſter, whoſe inclinations he always gratified in every thing, as far as duty to God would permit. To moſt people they appeared to live together very happily, but ſome of thoſe who were moſt acquainted with him ſaw that ſomething always depreſſed his mind ; as he never ſaid any thing of the cauſe of it, even to his moſt intimate friends, they could only gueſs at the reaſon of his depreſſion. At length a circumſtance of rage and impetuofity of temper in Mrs. W. brought to light a ſeries of acts of cruelty on her part, and of patience and ſubmiſſion on his, which were very ſurpriſing. On May the firſt, ſeventeen hundred and ninety-four, he left his houſe in the morning, and as he did not return in the evening, ſhe ſent to ſeveral of his friends to enquire for him ; declaring that ſhe knew no cauſe of his abſence, but was afraid that ſome evil had befallen him. By the next morning a general alarm was ſpread among Mr. W.'s friends, and an advertiſement was inſerted in ſome morning papers, and the watch-houſes were ſearched, under a ſuppoſition that he had fallen dead in a fit, and had been conveyed ſomewhere by the watchmen. In the meantime Mrs. W. appeared in the greateſt diſtreſs ; declaring that he left her with the utmoſt affection, without intimating any deſign of being out longer than uſual. A number of his friends were aſſembled at his houſe, condoling with Mrs. Wincheſter, who appeared inſoluble ; when the following letter was received by Mr. H. W. Mortimer.

London,

London, May 1, 1794.

“ MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

“ Your sorrow cannot be greater in reading this mournful epistle, than mine is in writing it. I hardly know whether I can disclose, even to you, the real cause of my absence, as I never before mentioned my case to any person, hoping for ever to have concealed it. Here perhaps you stand astonished, as well you may, when I tell you that I have been driven from my own house, by the hands of my wife, and have hardly escaped with my life, being much bruised, and my face much swelled by the blows which I have received : but as I have escaped, I return humble thanks to God who gave me my existence : in him I have put my trust for many years, and in him I confide, notwithstanding the darkness which at present surrounds me. My poor unhappy wife ! (for I can now speak freely of her) is of the most violent temper by far of any person that I ever saw, or I think ever read of, even in fiction. I knew something of this before I married her ; but thinking I could certainly conduct myself in such a manner as to make her happy, and determining to bear every thing patiently, I ventured to engage in the fatal bond. In a few weeks she began to exert her authority, to which I too imprudently gave way ; but if I had not so done I must have left my house, and what would have grieved me much more, I must have left my sphere

sphere of usefulness. Often have I borne the bitterest taunts, mockings, curfings, and the most horrid imprecations, yea, and the most violent blows, for the smallest trifles, even when no offence has been intended; while I have fallen upon my knees, wept, prayed, spoke kindly, and asked pardon, as though I had committed the greatest fault. At first she would sometimes seem ashamed, after her anger had subsided, and would ask my forgiveness; but of late years she has discovered no compunction for her conduct, and her temper has often risen to such a height from a word or any thing that she disliked.—An instance of which I will give you. About a year ago, I was going one day to Chatham, and had an order for some books in the country, which required me to go out a little before the time: as most of the books which I wanted were in the vestry, I took the keys of the Chapel, and got them, put them up and carried them to Mr. Hall's at the Bridge-foot, and as I had a little time to spare, owing to the coach being half an hour later than usual, I sat down and ate a bit of dinner; and as the keys would have been cumbersome to carry, I left them there. Mrs. Hall happened on Sunday to mention to Mrs. Winchefer, that I dined there on Thursday, that I seemed to be well and cheerful, and that I left the keys of the chapel at her house. When I returned on Monday, I brought with me the sad news of the death of my dear brother in America, and found a letter on the table confirming the fatal tidings;

tidings ; this did not hinder her from rating me as the *dirtiest dog* in the world, for stopping to dine at Mr. Hall's, and leaving my keys there. At first I was willing to believe she was in jest, not seeing how I could be wrong in so small a matter ; but she soon convinced me that she was in earnest, wishing me dead, and cursing me in the most shocking manner. She carried the matter so high, that I never felt the loss of my dear brother in the least, any more than though it had never happened. The first night after this she refused to sleep with me, went to another bed, and declared she would never sleep with me again. This she continued for three days and nights, upbraiding me that my crime was worse than adultery and murder, and at times cursing me in a way that is too horrible to mention. During this I went out one day with a full determination to leave her ; but calling at your house, I had some religious conversation with you, which so calmed my mind that I went home again. You may remember you told me I looked poorly : alas ! had you known what I then felt, you would have pitied me indeed.

“ I shall now give you a few hints of the dreadful quarrel of this unhappy day, which brought about that event of which I have been so long afraid. Mrs. W. and the maid had a few words in the morning about six o'clock. About seven I read the four first chapters of Matthew, and went to prayer in the family ; after which I was more than commonly buried
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in thought,—just then the maid brought in breakfast. My wife told her to put on the child's* things, and I happened unfortunately to say, 'What for? To go to school? It is not yet eight o'clock.' These were the identical words, and all that I said, which she highly resented, and refused to eat her breakfast. I pleaded with her, and begged pardon, and told her that I spoke without thought. She replied, I was a liar, and that I spoke from contradiction to her, because she had blamed the maid for not rising earlier. I said, my dear, I have begged your pardon, and to a generous mind, I should think that would be sufficient. At this she rose into a perfect fury, and went into the next room. I sat and prayed a while and then went into the room to her,—she flew at me in the greatest rage imaginable, with the most opprobrious language, striking me with all her power, and telling me that I had always studied to make her unhappy. I mildly replied, that if I had taken as much pains to please God, and to be a christian, as I had taken to please her, I should have been one of the foremost christians in England. She went on cursing me and threatening my life, telling me that if I spoke another word, she would take up the poker and split my scull; and indeed she frequently took it up seemingly with that intention. At last she cursed me perpetually till her breath was gone, and I almost

* One Sally Jones, a friend's child who lived with them.

thought

thought that she would have died upon the spot. She then threw herself into a chair, wept aloud, and seemed in hysterics through the violence of passion ; at length she recovered herself again, and went on cursing as before, calling me liar, and swearing by the great and awful name, that she would kill both me and herself. O, my friend, it is impossible for me to express the feelings of my soul during all this. As she continued raving, I went to the desk, and took out a little box containing fourteen guineas and a half. I should have only taken a part of it if I had had time to have divided it ; but that I could not do. I then made several attempts to get to the front door and get it open ; but she as often resisted me, and flying upon me, drove me again into the room : telling me to go out if I dared, if I did she would scream murder. I then came in and sat calmly down. She was in such a rage that she could not bear to see me ; but kept on threatening my life in such a manner, that I judged it best, and resolved accordingly, that if I could get safely out of the house, to return no more. Blessed be God, after a little more time I effected it, and she did not follow me out. I walked away, met two of my acquaintance, but did not disclose a word of the matter. I called at your house, you was not at home ; I shook your brother by the hand, and tore myself away,—probably to see you no more till we meet a little hence, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at

rest. I reflect with great satisfaction, that in the highest quarrels I never gave one blow ; nor, as I remember, one harsh word. But this conduct she called provoking, and insulting. The sacrifice I make this day, is by far greater than it would have been to have laid down my life in defence of the glorious cause in which I was engaged. I believe few have ever felt what I have endured ; and yet I have hitherto never complained. But alas ! alas ! all the pains I have used for the salvation of my companion have proved vain and fruitless. I now retire to save my own soul. I shall endeavour to spend the few days I have yet to live, in earnest prayer to God, and in the deepest humiliation and mourning. As who indeed could chuse but mourn in my condition ? To all those who may censure me for this step, (of which I have so long been afraid, and have now been compelled to adopt) I would say as my last advice, ‘ Judge nothing before the time when the Lord shall come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God.’ As for my temporal affairs they were in a prosperous condition ; but I was always afraid of this circumstance which is come upon me. I do not owe thirty pounds in the world, except to yourself. I have left effects much more than enough to pay, and I send you enclosed a bill of exchange on Mr. Thomas Armatt, merchant in Second-street, Philadelphia. He has a
little

little property of mine in his hands, enough to pay you. He is a good and faithful man, and will, I have no doubt, immediately honour his bill.

“ I am so overwhelmed with trouble, that I wonder I have been able to write at all; but God is good. Farewell.—Best love to all friends, and if they think of me, let their prayers ascend to God on my behalf.

“ I could wish that care might be taken of my unhappy wife. As for the truth of this narrative, I can say, ‘ The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever more, knoweth that I lie not,’ nor have I told one half, nor a tenth part; but you can never find any corroborating evidence of what I write. I have always kept the matter concealed from my nearest friends. I feel unutterable anguish in being thus forced to part from you all. I add no more, but that I am your greatly afflicted friend,

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.”

Mr. Mortimer went immediately, upon the reception of the above letter, to Mrs. Winchester’s house, where many friends were actually condoling with her. The letter was read before them, and the maid servant confirmed the truth of it as far as she had been witness to the circumstances; and Mrs. Winchester herself, after some ineffectual prevarication, confessed the facts.

Perhaps it may be thought by some, improper to

insert the above account, as they may conceive it to be a reflection on Mr. Winchester's character. I answer, first, The statement is true, and therefore it ought to be brought forward, as the real reason of his leaving England. Secondly, Though the above facts do not attach any immorality to Mr. Winchester's character, yet they exhibit an instance of pitiable weakness in a man, who otherwise, was great and good; and it becomes the faithfulness of history, to represent men as they actually were. In this manner, the sacred historians always wrote, even when they recorded the actions of the holiest men: and this impartiality is a great recommendation of the scriptures. Thirdly, This simple narrative may have a good effect upon many who read it, in teaching them not to think too highly of any man; but to look more to Christ, their only perfect head: and also it may be a warning to husbands and wives to keep their proper place, as the only way to insure their happiness, and that of their families.

Various were the reports of the cause of Mr. Winchester's sudden departure. His friends were left in great perplexity, and the enemies of the Universal Doctrine exulted much in expectation that the cause would soon expire. On May the fifth, Mr. Mortimer received another letter, of which the following is the substance.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"No doubt but you and all my numerous friends are anxious to know how I support the dreadful shock, and what my present thoughts are; and whether I find the comforts of religion of that vast importance to myself in this hour of greatest trial, as I have frequently represented them to others? To this I can answer as a dying man, I do find that my confidence in God has not failed, yet I have felt and suffered most severely, as must be imagined, by reason of the amazing tenderness of my spirits, and my very low state of health. I should have found the trouble insupportable if it had not been for the power of an Almighty arm. I have also the consciousness of innocence, and the testimony of a good conscience in the step I have been at last compelled to take, which has been before my mind for years past, and which I have often spread before the Lord in the bitterest agony of my spirit, and have begged his direction with all the powers of my soul. I may indeed say with Job, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet, yet trouble came. Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth. Even when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye, my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me."

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“How amazingly fuitable to my own case is the sermon I preached last Sunday evening ! “ What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” You remember in what an affecting manner I represented the trial of old Jacob, when he exclaimed, “ All these things are against me !” and that of Joseph, when he was long confined in the prison because he would not sin ; little dreaming how soon I was to go through a scene of affliction perhaps equal to theirs.

“ I cannot help drawing something of a parallel between the suffering of our Lord and my own trials. He was highly honoured by the multitude, and was in the most splendid pitch of his glory, as it might be on Sunday, and the next Friday hung agonizing on a cross ; thus I on Sunday last might have been thought one of the happiest mortals, all things were pleasant ; we rode in state, conducted in a chariot to a place of worship, attended by crowds, borne upon the wings of faith and love, and all the scene was charming ; and yet, O fickle world ! on the following Thursday and Friday I was crucified to the world, and the world to me ! I am now crucified indeed ! I have long perceived that there was one point in which I was so far from being dead to the world, that I was tremblingly alive in every nerve ; and that was in ambition to please my wife, and make her happy, and to desire happiness from her. To all other things I was dead ; as to myself I did not care in the smallest degree

degree for wealth, but for her sake I strove hard to lay up something for her if she should outlive me, that she might be comfortable and easy. I sought to please none in particular, but her alone, yet others were generally pleased with me, but the more I tried to please her, the more she was displeased with me. To popular applause I have been dead for many years, but a certain pleasure arose from her approbation which I did not feel from all the world beside; the anger of others I counted as nothing, but her's gave me inexpressible pain, to that degree that I have fallen upon my knees before her, and bursting into tears, have begged ten thousand pardons for some trifling offence, too ridiculous to mention, but which has filled her with indescribable rage; and if I was ever so happy as to hear her lips after the deepest humiliation pronounce my pardon, my foolish heart danced for joy: but that was seldom, and what was worse, have had the same thing thrown at me an hundred times over and over, even for years after, in almost every fit of passion. In short I have endeavoured to please her at any rate, let what would be the consequence, even though I have sometimes given occasion to my friends to be offended with me, have wounded my own conscience, and displeased my God. She was my only idol, she stood between me and my God. For her sake I have sinned, and by her I have been severely punished. She has been the instrument, but I view the justice of the awful, severe,

vere, and shameful punishment as coming from the hand of God, in a manner not to be conceived by you. To shew you how very exemplary this punishment is, I shall just mention to you that I was called by grace in the 19th year of my age, and in the same year I married my first wife ; I soon might have perceived, if I had been properly attentive, that God had not called me to a domestic life, for her first son was born dead, and she lay a long time in the greatest agonies before she could be delivered. It seemed to be spoken to my heart, I think before that event, as though it had been said, ‘ God will never suffer you to have any children to live.’ The next was a daughter, which was born alive, but was always weakly, and died at about seventeen months old, and I have never had a living child born since : she had two labours afterwards, in the last of which she died, after having been married to me five years and eight months ! Oh had I been as wise as I now am, and given up my heart wholly to God ! but in less than a year I married again, and in less than another year my wife came to her time, was delivered of one dead child, but another remaining, she died before she could be delivered. Then God commanded me to dedicate my heart to him, and in addition to the loss of my first wife, &c. he visited me immediately with fifteen weeks severe sickness, in which I was given over to die by all that saw me. It was then that I was crucified to popular applause for ever ; but, alas !

I was

I was not yet wholly given up to God, I married a third wife, one of the sweetest tempered women that ever I saw, and God was pleased to make me an instrument for the salvation of her soul; but before I had been married to her one year, she was suddenly struck by the hand of God, with a mortification in her breast, which in spite of all attempts to stop it, spread so as to kill her in less than eleven days; she died in great torment of body, almost equal to that of being burnt alive, but in great happiness of mind, and she sent messages by me to all her relations and many of her acquaintance, which, by the blessing of God, proved the conversion of many of them. Then in the time of her sickness my own soul was brought into greater liberty than I had almost ever enjoyed before; I was set above the fear of death, above the frowns and flatteries of the world, and filled with a zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, to a degree that I never experienced before nor since. Then I lived single for two years and a half, and in that time it is probable that I did more good as an instrument, than in all the rest of my life before and since. But, alas! I then first came to settle constantly in a city, which I am apt to think was not my proper place, preaching about from place to place in the country freely, was the work to which I was called. Nor was this all, but I married a fourth time to a woman that made a profession of religion, and I have reason to think truly possessed it; but she died in an

awful manner, before I had been married to her a year and nine months, being well one day and very cheerful, and a corpse before the next rising sun, being taken in labour (supposed with twins) and gone in an instant. The case was now so evident, that some of my friends advised me to marry no more, but dedicate myself entirely to the service of God, but I argued against them from the necessity of ministers being married to avoid reproach, &c. &c. Then it was that God gave me up to my own way, and since I did not hearken to the voice of his Providence, so often and solemnly repeated, to dedicate myself to the service of my God, without reserve or division of heart, he suffered me to enter into a state of bondage indeed; that as he said of the Israelites, "They shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries." 2 Ch. xii. 8. So I have endured a servitude for nine years and a half, I would not have borne one year for all the riches of the earth; for my sufferings have been indescribable. For as I have often said to my partner, when she has been exercising her tyranny over me, and among other insults telling me that I never loved at all, I have replied, "My dear, if I did not love you more than all the world, I could never bear this, I once should have judged it absolutely impossible for me to endure what I bear from you." She would then tell me to go away, that she wished I would, and often cursed the day that ever she saw me.

me. All this, and ten thousand times more, made me often break forth in the words of the Prophet Micah: "I will bear the indignation of Jehovah, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." The whole paragraph is exceeding applicable to my case, from chap. vii. 5th to 10th verse. But now I am crucified with Christ, he suffered extreme pain, so do I. He despised the shame, so do I. His friends were greatly discouraged and disheartened at his sudden, and to them, unexpected sufferings; so are mine. Appearances were much against him, so they are against me. His enemies for a while rejoiced over him, and thought they had finally prevailed, so do mine over me. He was one who sensibly felt his affliction, so do I. See my case described exactly in my Hymn ccxviii. *Pressed out of measure above strength*,—and indeed all the hymns from page 275 to 308, are descriptive of my own state, and which I never could have composed if my trials had not been extreme beyond expression. But now I am dead, consider me as a dead man, but in Christ I now live: O could you now hear me speak! in what a different manner should I express myself from what you ever heard me! As for the unhappy instrument of my misery, she that has given me more pain than all other things in the universal world put together, I do not feel the smallest trace of resentment against her, and I pray

every hour for her salvation. Why was it that she was so cruel to me ? she was kind even to the meanest animal. I have often wished for as much tenderness from her as she would shew to a strange cat in the streets. Yet she seemed anxious for my life, got things that were good for me to take, wished to see me make a handsome appearance, could not bear to hear any body speak against me ; but to me she would say on the most trifling occasion, all the bitter things that could be mentioned, sometimes for hours together, when I have made no reply whatever ; then perhaps after calling me all the villains, rogues, dogs, and ill names that our language unhappily supplied her with, she would fall upon me to beat me, bite me, threatened to tear me in pieces, and take away my life ! O such scenes have I endured as would make your blood chill. I knew that I deserved this sore punishment from the hand of God, whom I had in a great measure forsaken for her, and this kept me silent ; see my ccx. Hymn, page 288. O how many nights have I laid and cried to my God that he would deliver me from such a life, so contrary to my natural disposition, and so dangerous to my soul ? But so was I attached to her, and so infatuated, that I bore from time to time what was sufficient to drive most men out of their senses ; but God has appeared at last, and by her own hands compelled me to fly, and that with such haste as not to allow me time to take a second shirt : I have fled for my life, as the Prophet did,

did, when the Queen of Israel swore by her false Gods that he should be slain before that time to-morrow ; but God so disappointed her, that he never suffered him to die at all. But how much greater was my trial than his, when I heard my own wife, the idol of my heart and the delight of mine eyes, whom I had studied for many years how I should most serve, oblige, and please, swear by her Maker that she would murder me and herself, and seemed determined to do it by refusing to let me leave the room ; would accept of no submission, would not suffer me to speak, nor yet to hold my peace ; nay, when I looked upon her with eyes of love and pity, she told me not to provoke her so ; and when I cast my eyes down to the ground it was all the same.

“ I do not know whether it is possible that you should believe what I have written, but I was as perfectly master of myself at the time as I am now, and from the nature of things you must believe that I received the greatest of insults and provocations, that should have induced me to leave the idol of my heart, and a thousand friends, a most respectable situation, a good and comfortable living, house and home, books, papers, cloathing, &c. besides such an amazing prospect of usefulness. Truly, the pain I felt was like tearing the caul from the liver ; but it is past, the contest is over : It was my Saviour's kind hand that directed, he had a right to my whole heart,
and

and to my whole time, and to the exercise of all my powers ; now he has them all, and shall have them for ever.

“ Creatures no more divide my choice, I bid them all depart,
 “ His name, his love, his gracious voice, have fix'd my roving heart.
 “ I feel my warmest passions dead to all that earth can boast,
 “ This soul of mine was never made for vanity and dust.”

“ Now I can be happy in the meanest garb, despised and hated by mankind, I can dine upon a single pennyworth of bread and cheese, and feel perfectly resigned and contented. All is right ; I can sit down upon the ground, and praise my God, or walk and thank his name, and think myself rich in him.

“ I shine more to God than ever you saw me, though I am eclipsed to the world. I have long felt that I was entirely crucified to the world and all its delights and glories, except in that one attachment, which is now gone. I was not deceived, this trial has proved my religion genuine. O glory to God, I have not dealt in unfelt truths. I am a martyr, and hope to obtain a martyr's crown. I have been compelled to forsake all, and trust it is for Christ's sake.

I dare to suffer, but I fear to sin,
 And meekly bear the cross the crown to win.

“ O, my dear friend, my mouth is opened, my heart is enlarged, I am wholly filled with love, ready to
 do

do or suffer whatever my Saviour pleases: after what I have endured, nothing can be hard, I have gone to the *ne plus ultra* in this world.

“ Whether my constitution will survive the shock, and go through the hardships that lie before me, I cannot tell; but none of those things now move me; neither do I count my life dear unto myself. I hope to finish my course with joy. I thank you and all my friends a thousand times for all your love and kindness to a poor unworthy creature, undeserving of every favour. Be not discouraged because you see me overcome and killed. I have finished my testimony for the present, and Satan has had power to kill me as it were: but I shall rise again to a greater sphere of usefulness. Continue in the truth, and let no man be moved because of the afflictions that have befallen me; I trust that though Satan meant this for evil, God meant it for good. If my poor former companion be yet alive, and could calmly hear a message, I could find in my heart to say to her, “ Be not grieved nor angry with yourself, that you have banished me with disgrace from my house and home, from your presence and kindness, and from all my friends and acquaintance, and from my useful station; for though you knew not what you did, and the spirit that moved you meant it for the greatest possible harm to me, yet God hath already made it work for good, and I trust will more. I love you now with another sort of love, but more than ever;

ever ; I shall never spend another moment in seeking to please that temper in you, which it is impossible to please, but I shall pray for you continually. And I recommend you to all my friends to provide for your necessities, and to shew you all possible kindness, never reflecting upon you for all your conduct to me; and I hope this very evil will be the salvation of your soul, which will be then of more service than all my sermons, exhortations and prayers, in which I have laboured so many years : and then, though we should meet no more in time, yet we shall meet and be happy in the presence of God." All this, and much more, I could find in my heart to say to her : But, alas ! I fear she is not in a condition for receiving any message from me. I entreat you to assist her as much as possible, but have no concern for me at all, whether I live or die, all is well ; Christ is mine, and I am his, for ever and ever. You see I go as a lamb to the slaughter, without complaining : I am resigned to the will of God, though you would think me to be in the most wretched circumstances. But he that sends afflictions, can send patience to bear them. I could wish to know the fate of my unhappy companion, but dare not ask as yet, until the lenient hand of time, and the balm of resignation, have given me sufficient fortitude to bear what I expect to hear. — Desire Mr. Cue to take Dr. Sterne's books into his care, and settle his affairs ; the books are in the garret where I lived, and the accounts are in a pocket book

book in my closet, with a red cover. There are several other matters that I wish to mention to you, but my heart is too full, and too much engaged to say any more about these smaller things.

“ If you should suspect, by the post mark, where I am, take no notice at present. I leave it to your discretion what to do with these letters, whether to publish or suppress them. As for me, you need not fear; I am below, or rather above all censure or applause. I am now just calculated for the service of God, having nothing further to fear or hope for from the world. But if my wife be living, and in her senses, do not hurt her character; but rather let mine suffer, as I have wholly given it up be crucified. You are the only person to whom I have yet written; and, perhaps, at some future time, I may let you know where to write to me; in the meantime meet me at the throne of grace, where I continue (in my humble retreat) praying for you and yours, for all my friends, and for all mankind.

“ I am yours sincerely,
“ E. W.”

The substance of these letters was made known to Mr. Winchester's friends, as Mr. Mortimer made use of the liberty given him in the above order, to unravel the mystery of Mr. Winchester's departure, and thereby to clear his character of the imputation of immorality, treason, or debt, which his enemies

laid to his charge, according to their different humours or fancies. A plan was likewise proposed to remove Mrs. Winchester to America, under the hope that Mr. Winchester would then return, and resume his useful labours among them. It is true that his request of sparing Mrs. Winchester's character, was not very rigidly observed. The indignation of the people was much raised against her, especially when she confessed the truth of what Mr. Winchester had written, and owned that his conduct had always been tender and affectionate to her beyond all example. She was not indeed *personally* reproached by any, though held in abhorrence by all Mr. Winchester's friends. When propositions were made to her to remove her to America, with an allowance for her support, much beyond her deserts, she absolutely refused to hear any thing about it, saying that she should have the curse of all her relations, if she went to America without her husband ; and that her conduct to him would break her heart, if she had not opportunity to see him, and ask his pardon upon her knees. She added, and often repeated it, that could she but see him, and be with him but one quarter of an hour, she could make her peace with him. And therefore she earnestly besought all his friends, who had conversed with her, to bring them together again, often pronouncing a curse upon them who would not do it. But it is very clear that none of them had it in their power, for Mr. Winchester had

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not let any of them know where he was; they only knew that his last letter bore the post-mark of *Bristol* upon it.

In a few days after the receipt of the former, Mr. Mortimer received the following letter, which bears no date.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ This is probably the last letter you will receive from me, until I know further how the Lord will dispose of me. I am going to commit myself into the hands of my God. I am going a voyage, not knowing what shall befall me. I must expect many hardships, perhaps death itself. I would have all my friends look upon me as dead, for I am so in almost every sense of the word. I am but poorly accommodated for a long voyage, and especially in my health; but nothing that I can now meet with is a terror to me after what I have lately endured. I can now learn St. Paul’s lesson as fully as he himself, “ In whatsoever state I am, I can now be therewith content.” My heart is now entirely free, my Lord alone is my portion, and as he has, I trust, delivered me from the greatest bondage that ever any mortal endured, I purpose to dedicate all my future days to his immediate service, in a manner that I have never yet done; but whether my future days will be spent in a lonely retreat, far from the noise and bustle of the crowd, and wholly employed in

reading, writing, meditation and prayer; or whether I shall engage in a more extensive plan of public labour than ever, I shall leave to be determined by divine Providence, to whose guidance I shall entirely resign myself.

“ You must, no doubt, look upon it as a very dark and mysterious providence that should so suddenly suffer a minister of the glorious Gospel, placed in such a sphere of usefulness, surrounded with such a number of kind and loving friends, &c. to be driven away violently by one feeble woman, and abandoned to the wide world, banished as though he were a criminal, at a moment's warning, without time to settle his small concerns, bid his friends adieu, or so much as to take his cloaths. But yet you see Elijah, that great prophet, immediately after his having been owned of God by fire from heaven descending at his prayer, in sight of all Israel, fleeing for his life at the threat of a woman, and wandering in the desert as a vagabond! And you find also, that the blessed forerunner of our Lord Jesus, John the Baptist, was first imprisoned, and then soon after beheaded, through the influence of a woman: the latter of which our Lord suffered to be done, though he was then on earth. Do not therefore wonder at my lot. Their cases and mine are in some sense similar, but there is one circumstance that renders my condition harder than either of theirs. They suffered by great wicked women, to whom they had given

given the highest possible offence; Elijah, by slaying eight hundred and fifty false prophets, who were favourites of Jezebel; and John Baptist, by plainly telling Herod, that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife: but as for me, God knows that for many years I have almost given up myself wholly to serve and please the woman who has driven me into a banishment, which is, on several accounts, worse than death. I used to think and say, that I could rule and govern any woman that God should give me for a wife; but, alas! though I have lived so long with Mrs. Winchester, yet I never ruled her at all. I have often said to my own heart, and to God, to whom I alone made my complaint, "I rule my own house as much as I rule the Empire of China, and no more." It was on this account that I judged myself unworthy to be an overseer over the house of God. I believe that I had naturally a gift for government, but it was entirely in vain to attempt to rule over her, for she was determined to rule at all hazards; and therefore, for the sake of peace, which I love above all things, I was forced to submit. This I must have done, or else have left her; but I was determined to suffer any thing, yea almost to die, rather than do that, or even rather than I would complain to any creature on earth, though it were to my dearest friend. Had her government been any way tolerable, I should have been happy indeed; but her idea of government may
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be gathered from a sentence out of her own mouth, which I perfectly well remember, "I am surrounded with devils, (such she was pleased to call me and a maid, and a poor little child that trembled at her sight) and I must be a devil to govern them; and if I can't make them love me, I'll make them fear me." This kind of government I have endured for more than nine years, and I have never lifted my hand against her, nor ever denied her any thing in my power, nay, have scarce ever spoke one harsh word to her, nor complained of her to any; and if I have at any time reproved her intolerable temper, and ill usage of me, it has been in the softest manner imaginable, but this indeed has been very seldom, for she could not bear it. I have often offended her by saying and doing things that I thought would please her, and which she must have known was my only intention: and some of the greatest offences of my life were merely accidental, without thought or design, of a similar kind with that which occasioned our final separation, which I stated in my first letter. It is very likely that she may think me guilty of unpardonable cruelty in leaving her, and may represent me as without affection to her. I have often heard her say, that she would never live a day longer with a man that should strike her but once; but I have lived more than seven years with a woman that has often struck me, and frequently threatened to kill me if I spoke another word; whereas I have only said,

" Father

" Father forgive her, she knows not what she does;" or, "I can freely forgive you, my dear, and pray for you." This she could never endure, but would call it *cant* and *hypocrisy*. I would sometimes say, "My dear, it is impossible that it should be hypocrisy, because you could not bear what I do in this manner, was it to save your life; and if I did not love you above all the world, I should never take it twice of you." She would then charge me with provoking her, and drawing words out of her, and being the cause of all her sins. During the ill state of my health, if any of my friends, through their affection to me, have happened to say to her, "Madam, take care of Mr. Winchester; you must nurse him well, his health is very bad." O what has such a saying cost me! I always used to reply to them, That she was a good nurse, &c. But all was in vain. She would resent it in a manner not to be described; but the blame fell all on me, it was my fault, I suffered people to take such liberties with her, as any man of sense and spirit would resent. I have been frequently obliged to break off all intimacy with good friends purely to please her, without letting them know the reason, for I could not vindicate myself without exposing her, and I chose rather to bear all the blame myself, and let it be imputed to my unsocial disposition. I have borne such things from her, without the least complaint, even to herself, as (if I am not much mistaken) would have provoked

voked any other man in the kingdom to have left her long ago. I will mention one little instance as a specimen, and leave you to judge. In the year 1791, on the Sunday before Easter, she and I had been to a friend's house to dine, and in the evening we were all going to Glas House Yard, where I was to preach. She and I were walking arm in arm, some conversation came up, and I said something at which she took offence, and by the time we had got to the Chapel door, she had worked herself up to such a pitch of rage, that, not knowing how else to vent it, she suddenly took hold of the finger next to my little finger, and with her whole might bent it back, so as to strain every cord and sinew of it. I thought it was broke. She then turned about, and refused to go in. Though the pain I was in was almost intolerable, I took no notice, but turning a little with her, I persuaded her to go in, and at length prevailed. I went up into the pulpit, and though in great misery, went through the service, and by that very circumstance took a text that led me to speak of the sufferings of Christ. My finger swelled to nearly twice its usual size, the blood settled at the joint, I lost the use of it for some time, and it did not wholly get well for many months; yet I never mentioned it to her afterwards, nor intimated it to any living creature from that day to this. So that my sufferings have not been small. I think I have suffered more than many deaths, and thought I would
endure

endure to the end, but I could not. I don't doubt but the very imperfect account I have given you in these letters will fully justify my conduct in your fight, and in the fight of all my friends, and of all that may ever read these lines. Indeed, all my friends must suppose, if I had never written a word, that I had some great cause to do as I have done; but I believe none of them will ever be able to imagine it so great as it really is. They will naturally be surprized that I never gave a hint of it to any body by conversation or writing. But I have more to do than to justify myself to my friends, and to the world. I must be able to answer it to my God, and to my own conscience, or I can have no true peace. And this, blessed be God, I trust I am fully able to do.

“ As I may not live to write to you again, it may not be amiss to give you a little sketch of the ground upon which I have acted, which if it is ever necessary to publish, I trust will glorify God, and remove all reproach from his cause; but as for my own character, that is but of small consequence. I have for years past made it matter of prayer to God, that he would direct me in the affair, and let me know his will, and that he would by some means deliver me. I have prayed that he would convert my companion by his grace, which would have been a compleat deliverance; but in the whole I have had but little hope of this. I have also prayed that God would

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take me out of the world, and thus deliver me from that bitter bondage in which I was held : and this I chose far rather than to be obliged to leave her ; but as I have long seen that I must leave her, I have earnestly prayed for fortitude. I have been constantly answered by such texts as this, " It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman." Prov. xxi. 19. " It is better to dwell in a corner of a house top alone, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." Prov. xxv. 24. Now, that which God commends as better, is certainly to be chosen ; therefore he cannot be displeased with me for leaving a contentious and angry woman, and going into a wilderness or some solitary place, and passing the rest of my days in peace and quietness, even though I should endure hunger, cold, and nakedness ; for God has said, " Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith." And so I find it to be by experience.

" But some may say, If you have borne it so long, it must have become easier by custom and habit. I answer, Not so ; for God says in his word, " A continual dropping in a rainy day, and a contentious woman are alike. Whoever hideth her, hideth the wind, and ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself." Prov. xxvi. 15. A continual dropping will wear a stone, and though it may be endured for
a little

a little time, it grows worse and worse. I have read, that in some of the tortures of the Inquisition, that they place a man with his head naked, and confined, where water from a great height falls upon him drop by drop: this at first seems light, but at last becomes inexpressibly painful, and will wear a hole through the bone of the skull, and every drop will sound like thunder to the tormented man. This is a true picture of my case. How often have I said, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest. Lo! then would I wander afar off, and remain in the wilderness; I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." This I have now done, and I have the testimony of a good conscience, and the approbation of my God. But, O what a happiness it would have been to me, had I regarded that prohibition, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" But since I did not regard this in time, I have been compelled, sorely against my will, to come out of that state, and to be separate, and I trust God will receive me, and will be a father unto me, and that I shall still be owned as a son by him.

"Perhaps it will be objected that our Lord hath forbidden a man to put away his wife, and to marry

another, save for the cause of fornication. I answer, I have a far greater cause than that of fornication : for if it was judged, and punished as murder under the law, for children to strike or curse their parents, judge ye, whether if a wife had often done the same to a husband, what would have been done to her ; but the crime is not so much as mentioned ; it is too horrid to be even supposed. And I believe that it is no man's duty to bear it so long as I have done. I believe such an instance has but seldom occurred in the history of mankind. And though I have been forced to leave her, it is not for the sake of another, but to devote my future days to God.

If after you have read this, you should be convinced that I have done right, and have not forfeited my character as a Christian and a Minister, (as I trust I have not in the least) and my friends should be of the same mind, and I should live through the voyage that I am going to take, and you should think best for me to return again to London, after a proper time allowed me to mourn for my sins and misfortunes, I will write you word where to direct to me, provided that my wife will accept of a handsome maintenance, of an hundred a year, and retire to her own country ; nay, I am willing she should have all the goods and wealth I ever gain, except bread and water for myself ; so that I may but have peace and quietness, and the full liberty of serving God as much as I should desire. If this should be the will
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of God, I humbly pray him to direct it. I have opened my whole heart to you without reserve. I leave it to your prudence what use to make of these letters. I humbly ask forgiveness of God, and of all whom I have ever offended; and I freely, and from the bottom of my heart, forgive all who have ever offended me; not by any means excepting the instrument of my misery, praying that she may live to repent, and become a sincere Christian; for which I shall pray while I have breath.

“ I now resign myself to God, venturing without anxiety upon the ocean, exposed to storms, pirates, want, captivity and death; but humbly secure of an interest in my Redeemer’s love: and am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor any thing else, shall ever be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. I now feel the comforts of religion in a manner that I never did before. O my Redeemer, how precious he is! He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

“ As I have filled up two sheets in this letter, I must put them in a cover; I could not let it come a blank. My soul goes out in love to all my kind friends in London, and in earnest longings for their welfare. O how I feel for you all, as I am now about to take my leave of the Island where you dwell! Perhaps the ocean may swallow me up; well, my
Saviour’s

Saviour's will be done, I am in his hands. I have unburdened my my mind to you of a load which I intended should have gone down to the grave with me; but God has thought otherwise. I was apt to think that my being acquainted with you would be for our mutual happiness; but the pleasures of friendship have been succeeded by bitter sorrow. The sorrow which I have occasioned you will not soon be blotted out of your mind.

"O my poor unhappy wife! what have you done? You have done that which wicked men and devils could not do. You have banished me from London, perhaps for ever. You have cast me down from on high; but I forgive you from my heart, and bid you farewell: may Jesus make you happy in his love.

"Dear Sir, excuse me, but in parting with her I have cut off the right hand, and plucked out the right eye. The pain is great; but I am supported. O pray for me continually, and desire such of my friends as have an interest at the throne of grace to do the same, especially my dear friend Woolly. How must he feel!——I could write more, but my heart bleeds——Adieu, adieu. I am yours in Jesus,

"E. W."

The contents of this letter gave some hopes to the congregation at Parliament Court, that Mr. Winchester would sometime return again; but as Mrs. Winchester

Winchester still refused to leave London, there was no near expectation of it. In the mean time the congregation waited anxiously to hear from him. It was in May, 1794, that Mr. Winchester embarked for America. Mr. Mortimer received the following letter a few weeks after it was written.

“ *Boston, Nov. 17, 1794.*

“ *My very dear Friend and Brother,*

“ When I wrote to you last, from Bristol, I remember that I promised to write again when I reached America. The trouble I was then in seemed almost too much for me to bear. But looking beyond second causes, and considering it as the hand of a kind Father, and intended for my good in the end, supported me then, just so as to keep me from sinking.

“ I sailed from Bristol in a brig bound for New York, on the 19th of May. In this vessel were seventeen passengers. I paid ten guineas for my passage. I had bought a few cloaths and bedding to accommodate me in my voyage, which, together with my living for near three weeks after I left London, so entirely stripped me of my money, that I had not sixpence in my pocket when I went to sea. On the 24th of June we happened to light on a brig bound from Amsterdam to Boston. I left the vessel I was in, and the weather being calm, went on board that which was going to Boston, at which place we arrived

rived on July the 12th, afternoon, almost eight weeks after I had sailed from Bristol.

“ My return to this country was sudden and surprising to all who knew me ; and various have been the conjectures and reports which have gone abroad on the occasion ; but the most common was, that I had fled from persecution, for fear of being taken up by the government, for publishing my Oration on the discovery of America, or my Sermons on the three woe trumpets. But I have always had the satisfaction of telling all that have asked me, that the government of Great Britain never concerned itself with me ; and that I never gave the government any umbrage. But the real cause of my leaving London so abruptly, I have not mentioned to my father, mother, brothers, or sisters, or to any friend I have in America ; and I do not know that any person in this part of the country knows any thing of the matter. I have received a letter from Mr. Campbell, who is now in New York, in which he informed me that he had received the account from some of his friends in London. So I suppose that it will soon be spread abroad through the whole world wherever I have been, known, or heard of. This will be the finishing stroke of the trial : what will be its consequences time must discover. Perhaps I shall have no more place in these parts, where now I have the greatest door open that I ever saw, insomuch that I am surprised at the alteration since I was here last.

I have

have preached in a great many meeting houses, of different denominations, and to great numbers of people, as often as eight or nine times a week, and with greater acceptance than I ever did. I cannot help viewing the hand of God in sending me thus suddenly to my native land. Infidelity I find is beginning to prevail, and as it has pleased God in some measure to qualify me to defend Revelation, I believe I should be far more useful than I ever was in my life, was it not for this most unfortunate affair. Although I am not conscious of having acted in the least out of character in this matter ; yet my feelings, as you may suppose, are much hurt with the circumstance. I sometimes think it will require years before I can look my former acquaintance in the face. Though you are one of my dearest friends, yet I had not sufficient fortitude to receive a letter from you while I was in England : and till now I could not get freedom to write to you, and let you know where to direct to me ; but if you can think me worthy of your esteem, and will take the trouble to write to me, you may direct to me at Mr. Folsom's, Printer and Bookfeller, No. 30, Union Street, Boston ; where I shall get it, and the contents of it will much determine my future conduct.——Whatever money you have advanced at my desire, send me an account of it, and I will repay you. My hearty love to all my dear friends in London. I know not if I shall ever see them again in this world;

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but I love them heartily in our dear Lord. You may let them know that I have much more liberty in my work than I ever had, which is a great comfort to me in all my afflictions. I could write more to you, but must now bid you farewell, and subscribe myself your sincere friend and brother in 'Christ,

ELHANAN WINCHESTER."

By the same post also he wrote to me; but as the letter is the same in substance as the above, it is not inserted. It appears that soon after he wrote the above to Mr. M. he published that excellent little piece in answer to the first part of T. Paine's *Age of Reason*, called *A Defence of Revelation*. This was republished with great acceptance in London. He also in the course of the year 1795 published *A Political Catechism*. I have not seen this; but an extract from it was published in London in the *WEEKLY REGISTER* for May the 9th, 1798, but without his name. It appears from this extract that he warns the United States of the dreadful effects of infidelity upon society, and in a very masterly way exposes the evil tendency of French principles. He dedicated this work to the Universities and Seminaries of learning in America, and I am informed that it has gone through several editions. It is surprising that in the state of mind in which he left England, he should have been able to have written any thing, or even to have preached with acceptance;

tance; but the native energy of his mind was not depressed by the very distressing and untoward circumstances which had befallen him. Whatever mankind may think of the *prudence* of his conduct in leaving England, yet surely no immorality can be ascribed to him in it. He seems to have acted in the uprightness of his heart, and to have done that which he thought best. Had his case been my own, I think I should not have done as he did, and yet perhaps I might not have done better. It is easy for those who have not the trial to blame the conduct of those who feel the heavy pressure of afflictions upon them. Thus did Job's friends blame him, and no doubt but there were some blameable things in the conduct even of that holy man; notwithstanding which he is set forth as an example of patience and faith to all generations: and He who judgeth righteous judgment approved of him in preference to those who were very liberal in their censures of him. Instead, therefore, of criticising severely, I would indulge a few reflections relative to our departed friend, which may yield me some improvement.

First. How mysterious it seems that God should suffer a man so eminent in gifts and usefulness, to labour so many years under so heavy a trial! God's ways are in the whirlwind, and his footsteps in the great deep, and his paths are not known.

Secondly. I remark his long continued patience and love towards the unhappy instrument of his af-

fictions. This appears almost without a parallel, and strikingly shews the goodness of his heart. He pursued the same line of conduct towards her which the Father of mercies does towards guilty and sinful men; and though his treatment of her did not appear to have had its full effect while he lived, yet it is to be hoped that it may have, now she is left to her own cool and solitary reflections. But be this as it may, his conduct towards her will meet with the approbation of every one who can distinguish betwixt doing evil for evil, and overcoming evil with good.

Thirdly. Let his conduct in point of prudence have been what it might, yet his last labours in America, both from the pulpit and the press, were signally owned of God, even after his case and circumstances were well known there. I therefore consider the triumph of those who rejoiced at his afflictions, as being reprov'd by the conduct of Providence towards him.

Lastly. For full perfection of character, I look only to Him, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; but who, notwithstanding, loved sinners, and gave himself for them. These reflections flow not merely from the source of private friendship, but are justly due to the character of a truly amiable, laborious, and pious man, who, if, in the course of his trials, discovered the infirmity of human nature; yet is rather to be considered as an example

ample of patience, fortitude and faith, than an object of censure.

After he had sent word where to direct to him, Mr. Mortimer, myself, and many other friends wrote to him. There was also a letter from the congregation, signed by several hundred persons, earnestly intreating him to return to Old England; so fully were his friends satisfied of the integrity of his conduct; but it appears by one of his last letters to Mr. M. that none of these ever came to hand, as he says expressly, "I do not know whether any of my friends have written to me, as I have never received a line from England since I came away." It is probable that this circumstance gave him an idea that his friends in England had totally rejected him, and might be a reason why he did not write to any of them for almost the last two years of his life; though no doubt but Mrs. W.'s influence (after their reconciliation) had great weight with him in that.

As Mrs. W. by her absolute refusal to return to America, had deprived the congregation at Parliament Court of the hope of seeing Mr. W. again, she was consequently entirely neglected by them. However when she certainly knew that he was in that country, and would not return to England while she was here, she privately shipped herself for America, and arrived there March 15, 1795. She soon found opportunity to see Mr. W. and prevailed with him to live with her again. He continued to travel and
preach

preach to great congregations through the States of New England, Rhode Island, New York, to Philadelphia; but did not settle any where till a small time before his death. But finding his health and strength greatly decrease, he purchased a small farm with a good house upon it, at Hartford in Connecticut, as an asylum for his wife; a striking proof of his full reconciliation to her. Here he settled, calmly expecting the stroke that should put an end to his mortal existence. I am informed that he continued to preach till within a few days of his death to very numerous congregations in that neighbourhood. That it was often thought he would die in the pulpit. That his spirits and voice did not fail him to the last. That he continued to testify the universality of divine love with his latest breath, and that he died in the fulness of joy, singing praise to God and the Lamb for the riches of redeeming love. He departed this life April 18, 1797, in the 47th year of his age.

I have written the above account with much anxiety and sympathy of mind for the case of our deceased friend, and of all others who are in like circumstances, either from their husbands or wives. There is nothing more distressing than such situations, nor perhaps more dangerous to the interests of the soul. A man's family ought to be an asylum to him where he may forget the fatigues of life, and solace himself with the mutual exercise of the fullest and

and purest friendship ; the confidence of which ought never, for a moment, to be shaken. But alas ! this is too seldom the case, even among professors of the Gospel : there are separate interests in families, which beget jealousies, discords, and harsh words, whereby their prayers are hindered, and their souls grievously injured. In the case of Mr. Winchester it is difficult to assign a reason for the unprecedented conduct of his wife, as he always was, by her own confession, kind even to fondness ; and never denied her any thing that he thought would gratify her. It is to be hoped there are but few upon earth who take pleasure in giving pain to the person who loves them, merely because he loves them. This is an height of wickedness not often attained : if it was ever fully exemplified I think it must be in the conduct of the unhappy Mrs. W. It is a maxim with me, that no rational creature is so bad, as to be past mending. I rejoice therefore in the prospect that even Mrs. W. will sometime see her past conduct in its true light, and deeply lament it. I wish sincerely that it may be in the present life. If this sketch should ever reach her eye, I hope it will have a tendency to forward the good work of repentance upon her mind.

The following is an extract from a Boston paper of April 28, 1797, and was inserted in the Universalist's Miscellany for June the same year ; but as these Memoirs are a separate work, and may fall into the hands

hands of some who may not have the Miscellany, it will be proper to insert it here.

“ Died at Hartford after a long and distressing illness, the Rev. Elhanan Winchester, preacher of the doctrine of the *Universal Restoration*, aged forty-six years. His funeral was attended, on Friday the 21st of April, by a numerous concourse of sympathizing friends and spectators, from Hartford and the neighbouring towns; and a sermon was preached on the occasion by the Rev. Nathan Strong, from Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

“ Mr. Winchester was born at Brooklyn, in the State of Massachusetts, of reputable parents; and to very unusual natural powers of mind he added the embellishments of the *traveller*, the *historian*, the *philosopher*, and a general knowledge of the circle of science; but most peculiarly shone in his favourite profession, that of a *divine*.

“ His extensive acquaintance not only throughout the *United States*, but in *London*, most of the *kingdom of England*, and some parts of *France*, with his publications among the learned, render useless all encomiums. He was eminent in the pulpit for his oratory, his strength of argument, his superior knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, his unbounded fervency in propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as not only offering, but in the most unequivocal manner

ner securing, peace and salvation to all intelligent beings.

His Christian creed may be learned by those who read his *Dialogues on the Restoration of all Things*; but more fully understood by his associates in life, and the spectators of his death, where this luminary of the Christian faith shone with peculiar lustre.

Here was to be seen the most disordered and distressed state of body, with a mind more calm than his most indifferent spectators; serene and brightening at the near approach of death, like the increasing light of the morning without clouds; as a dying man calling on his attendants to bear witness to his unshaken faith, and reliance on *that system* of the Gospel he had so fully published, and frequently inculcated from the pulpit. The private character of the deceased most clearly evinced the benevolence and sincerity of his profession; and his philanthropy was as unlimited as the extent of his creed. Even slander and falsehood had no appeal but to ignorance and malice, in their various attacks upon his reputation.

Serenity of mind, calmness of temper, warmth of friendship, and compassion for the distressed, were prominent features in his life and conversation.—However distressing to a bereaved *relict*, an aged *father* and *brothers*, a numerous *acquaintance*, and to the world in general, the separation of an affectionate husband, a dutiful child, beloved brother, and ami-

able friend, guide and pattern of Christian virtue; let not the obligations we are under to the sovereign Disposer of all human events be forgotten; but let us bless his name, "that this candle of the Lord has so long continued to burn, and that we have been blessed with his light."

From the above account of our departed friend, it appears that he was much respected by many in America; that he spent nearly the three last years of his life there in great usefulness, and died in the midst of his labours, much lamented. A friend in America, with whom Mr. W. was well acquainted, told me that he heard him preach at New-York, in a *riding-school*, to about fifteen hundred people, and that he often had an audience as large as that.

It may not be amiss here to add a word or two concerning the present state of the *Universal Doctrine*. Many of its friends are grieved that it spreads no more, and some of them seem to fear that it is on the decline in England; while many of its opposers tremble at its progress, and say it works like leaven, and spreads its influence far and wide. Their different views and feelings may be well accounted for, though very opposite to each other. For on the one hand it is true, that the Congregation of Parliament-Court, though still very respectable for numbers, is not so very numerous as it was in Mr. W's time. His talents were popular beyond most, and the novelty of the sentiment had doubtless considerable attraction

traction with it. Novelty has now ceased, but the *real* and *serious* friends of the doctrine are increasing, particularly in the country. It is true not many ministers have openly embraced it; the sacrifice of so doing is greater than most men have courage to make; but many individuals of every denomination are daily convinced of it; and on this ground it is that the opposers of the doctrine are alarmed at its progress. Beside the congregations which professed it while Mr. W. was in England, there is now one at Wisbeach, the pastor of which, Mr. R. Wright, has lately written several excellent letters, inserted in *The Universalist's Miscellany*, upon *Election as connected with the Restoration of all Things*. Another, and increasing congregation has lately been raised at Northiam, in Suffex; and one at Rolvenden, in Kent. Another is now forming at Brighthelmstone; and I hope soon to see one at Chatham. It is an evil to be lamented, that at several places where there are many persons who believe the doctrine, they do not unite in its support; for though it is an happiness to see truth received by individuals, yet there wants a proper focus, so to speak, to collect the rays of truth together, that thereby its light may be properly exhibited to the world. A congregation is such a focus, and if the believers of the Universal Doctrine in every town and village would unite, I have no doubt not but we should see it flourish much more than it has done, and there would soon be mi-

nisters, who now believe it, men of ability, who would come forward to preach it. As a proof that the doctrine is still spreading among individuals, I observe, that when Mr. W. left England, there was near half the *second* impression of his *Dialogues* on hand, but they have been all sold near a twelve-month ago, and are still daily asked for. The same has happened to the *Everlasting Gospel*, a new edition of which was published two years ago, and is still much called for; and as for his *Lectures*, they have been out of print these three years, as also has *The Doctrine of the Resurrection defended*, and half his other tracts.

The effect which the Universal Doctrine has already had upon the religious world is greater than at first sight may appear. For numbers of Christians, who were formerly strenuous advocates for the eternal misery of sinners, are now much softened upon that tremendous sentiment, and most preachers of reflection touch very cautiously upon it. Many, indeed, are content with using only the express language of the Scriptures, as they stand in our translation. And as the phrases, *endless misery*, and *endless punishment*, do not occur in the sacred pages, so these thinking men never make use of such phrases. Others, who have thought still more upon the subject, have given up the doctrine of *endless conscious misery* entirely. These hold the sentiment which was formerly called *Annihilation*, but which they, in more modern phrase, chuse

chuse to call *Destruction*. I greatly rejoice at the spread of this sentiment, for several reasons. For, *first*, though it leaves a reflection upon the Divine character, by supposing that some of the moral offspring of God are so greatly corrupted, that he either cannot, or will not restore them; yet it does ascribe a measure of mercy to the Deity, by teaching that he will not suffer them endlessly to linger in misery, but, by a sort of *cruel compassion*, will strike them out of being, as the last and only remedy remaining for their condition. *Secondly*, though this scheme is deficient, by not ascribing the full glory to the mediation of Jesus Christ, which the Scriptures allow to it, yet it does teach the total destruction of sin; though, alas! this is to be effected by the total destruction of, perhaps, the greater part of the intelligent creation of God!!! *Thirdly*, this view of the final issue of the Divine dealings with fallen creatures, removes that awful and horrible weight from the heart of a believer, with which the doctrine of *endless misery* depresses it, and thereby gives some relief to the feelings of humanity, yet still it obscures half the glories of Christ, draws an everlasting veil over half the character of the blessed God, and leaves half the benevolent desires of a renewed heart towards its fellow-creatures for ever unfilled!

Lastly, I rejoice at the spread of the doctrine of Destruction, because it seems to me to be a considerable step towards the belief of the full doctrine of
Divine

Divine Love. The minds of pious men are generally cautious, and fearful of going beyond the bounds of revealed truth. Habituated, as they justly are to reverence the authority of Scripture, and having been used to think of the sentiment of eternal misery as true, they have a measure of timidity in disavowing it even after they have discovered its fallacy, and are fearful of shocking the prejudices of mankind too violently; they, therefore, are often led to seek for some medium betwixt the full blaze of truth and the midnight darkness of error. Such a medium betwixt the unfounded notion of endless wrath and the luminous truth of the restitution of all things, I conceive the doctrine of destruction to be, and therefore I look with pleasure upon its progress.

From the progress of my own mind upon the subject of future punishment, I think it a great thing when any one is convinced that it will not be *eternal*. For though such an one may rest for a while in the doctrine of destruction, yet it appears to me that a thinking man, who has imbibed the *spirit* of Divine truth, *which is love*, will not long remain in those views. He will find that the word *aionion*, which we render *everlasting* and *eternal*, and by which the duration of punishment is described, does not necessarily mean *endless*; because the Scriptures speak of *aionion* hills, which must be destroyed in the general conflagration of the earth; of the *aionion* priesthood of Aaron and his sons, which has long ceased; of the

aionion

aionion covenant of circumcision, which has long been abolished, &c. And though the happiness of the righteous is said to be *aionion* in Matt. xxv. 46. yet it will be observed, the happiness there mentioned will come to an end, because it is the happiness of the *kingdom* of Christ, which kingdom will come to an end, when he shall have put down all rule authority and power, and have subjected all things to himself: then he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. The happiness of the righteous will then no longer exist in the *kingdom state*, but in a more glorious state and degree, under the *sole and immediate* dominion of the Father. The candid enquirer upon the subject will also perceive, that, though God is called the *aionion* God, yet even this will not prove that the word *aionion* necessarily conveys the idea of endless duration, as the two following considerations will demonstrate. *First*, It is evident, from the above instances, that the word must be sometimes limited; if, therefore, it is ever taken in an unlimited sense, it must be because the *subject* determines it so, as in the present case, the *aionion*, i. e. *everlasting* God. This is the most that can be granted or inferred when the word is applied to God. But, *secondly*, we read of a time *before the aions*, i. e. *ages began*. 1 Cor. ii. 7. But was there ever a time before God existed? No, surely. We also read of the *end of the aions, ages*, Heb. ix. 26. But

But will there ever be a time when God will cease to exist? Now, as the word *aion* occurs plural, its meaning cannot be *eternity*, for then there will be *eternities* plural, which cannot be admitted. And if the *aions* begin and end, how then can *aionion* duration express the eternity of God? When, therefore, we read of the *aionion*, or everlasting God, we understand thereby that God exists through all the *aions*, or ages, and governs them after the counsel of his own will; but his *eternity* we learn from the necessity of his existence. It will therefore follow, that there is no word connected with future punishment which implies eternity of duration, but only that there is an *aion*, or age, appointed for the punishment of the wicked, and that punishment is called *aionion*, or *age-lasting* punishment; and when that age expires, the punishment of it will cease, and the times of the restitution of all things will take place, which God hath spoken by all his holy Prophets since the age began. Acts iii. 21.

If any man could prove the eternity of punishment from the *nature* of it, he would then do something important to the support of that tremendous subject: but that this would be a difficult task will appear from the following thoughts; namely, there can be but three ends proposed in inflicting future punishment at all, *Pleasure, Honour, Profit*. These three designs can apply but to three characters, *God, the righteous, and the sinner*. First, *God*. Can it be
any

any *pleasure* to him, that his creature should be endlessly miserable? Doth he delight in their pains and groans? No, as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.—Is it any *honour* to him that his creature should be out of the reach of his grace, and from necessity of circumstances be exposed to endless ruin and pain? No, it is a dishonour to his wisdom, that he has produced a creature that finally should be so circumstanced; or to his goodness, that he had not a better design in producing his creature; or, if his design was good, it is a dishonour to his power, because that good design has not been accomplished.—As for *profit*, it is impossible to conceive that any can arise to him from the endless pain of his creature.

Secondly, the *Righteous*. Can they have *pleasure* in the endless misery of the wicked? Every benevolent heart says, no. Can it be any *honour* to them, nay, it is a dishonour to human nature at large, that any part of it should be rendered so irrecoverably abject. As for *profit* they can have none, except safety, and that is fully answered by the confinement of the wicked in hell till their reformation.

Thirdly, the *Sinner*. Damnation cannot be a *pleasure*, nor an *honour* to him; nor can *endless* damnation be any *profit*. But limited punishment, to humble and subdue the sinner, will be of endless profit to him.

As then unceasing torments can answer no possible good end to any one in the universe, we must

conclude them to be neither the will nor the work of God.

Mr. Winchester never aimed at establishing any separate sect, professing his own opinions; on the contrary he greatly lamented the divided state in which Christianity now appears, and, always in his preaching, writing, and conversation, set an example of candour and Christian charity, which was highly edifying; and I am happy to say, that his immediate friends and acquaintance possess the same temper of mind. Yet even this amiable disposition, if not attended with zeal in supporting the doctrine of Universal Love, will ultimately injure the spreading of the truth. So great is the prejudice of the religious world, that they will not suffer an Universal preacher to minister in any of their places of worship, nor any of their ministers to preach in an Universal place; how then shall the testimony to this truth be preserved, but by maintaining separate places for its exercise. I would recommend this thought to the serious consideration of all the friends of the Universal Doctrine, that while they preserve themselves superior to religious prejudices, by shewing love to all men, their own cause may not suffer by their inattention to its prosperity.

The period will certainly come, which our Lord prayed for in John xvii. 21, 23, when the whole church of God will be one, even as the Father and the Son are one. The consequence of this union will be glorious indeed, for then the world shall believe

lieve that the Father has sent the Son to be the Saviour thereof.

Perhaps the present progress of infidelity, which it is probable will end in the dissolution of all civil establishments in religion, may dispose good men to unite for the defence of Christianity; and when they come to see the full view of Divine Love, they will be one family indeed. Till then, let us hold on our way, though we meet with difficulties, truth will finally be triumphant.

It is not probable that this truth will ever again be hidden; it has been openly brought forth to view, and set in a clear and popular point of light by Mr. Winchester: his works continue to be read with great avidity; several congregations now avow the sentiment; a multitude of individuals of different denominations believe it; and, in spite of railing and slander, it is still making its way. May its progress increase and continue, till the knowledge and righteousness of Jehovah cover the whole earth.

Among other arguments in favour of the Restoration, we may justly mention one drawn from the experience of every real Christian. It will be universally allowed, that the true spirit of Christianity is love; therefore he that loveth not is not born of God; yea, even he who doth not love his enemies is not truly born of God, for God is Love. It will also be in general allowed, that every unrenewed mind is in a temper contrary to love; yet I appeal to every good man, whose heart is not corrupted by

his system, whether he doth not wish well to all mankind? whether the love of his heart doth not embrace all? he will answer, yes. I ask, whence came this love? is it natural, or did he receive it from God? He will say, from God, no doubt. I ask again, doth your love exceed the love of God; You say you love all, and wish well to all; surely then he that gave you that little drop of love which you possess, must himself be a boundless ocean of love! Can he then consign any of his creatures to endless wrath? He hath taught you to love all, then he loves all. He hath taught you to forgive all, will he then keep endless wrath towards any?

Let me here relate a circumstance concerning myself. When I first received the knowledge of Divine truth, I felt my heart expanded in love to all mankind. Happy in a sense of Divine favour myself, I felt an inexpressible anguish upon my mind at the thought that any should be endlessly lost. I was once talking to a Christian friend of the name of *Winchester*, an old professor of the Calvinistic sentiment. I told him the feelings of my heart towards my fellow-creatures. He stopped me, and told me I was wrong; for, said he, 'God does not love all, he has not elected all, Christ did not die for all, neither will all be saved; and, therefore you should not pray for all.' I was at that time very young, and had but lately tasted that the Lord was gracious. I was also ignorant of the peculiar sentiments of different

ferent sects ; but I thought that every Christian loved *all* men, and prayed for the salvation of *all* men. Alas ! how greatly was I deceived ! As my friend, who had reproved me, was a man in years, and respectable in his Christian profession, I therefore hesitated, and began to fear that I was wrong in my feelings. I read Dr. Gill's works, and received the principles of *Calvinism*, which I preached for sixteen years ; during which time, my heart, with its feelings of love, and my head, with its cold unfeeling creed, were at perpetual variance. I have reason to bless the day, which by a full discovery of Divine truth, set me at liberty. My heart and head now both agree, and I both know and feel, *that God is Love.*

Let us now take a brief view of Mr. Winchester's writings, most of which have one general design, that of proving the *Restitution of all Things* to be the ultimate end of the Divine conduct in Christ Jesus.

1. His Dialogues on *Universal Restoration*. This work has met with very good acceptance. The intention of it is to obviate the current and popular objections that are brought against the doctrine ; and to exhibit its evidence from the Scriptures in a plain and connected way ; and to make the doctrine familiar to mankind without troubling them with much criticism. The *Critical Review*, for September 1789, gives the following account of it :—‘ Our author with great candour and extensive knowledge of the subject, discusses the doctrine of eternal punishments.

ments. He thinks there will be a period, when every sinner will be restored to the Divine favour. This doctrine is perfectly consistent with the benevolence of the Deity. It is supported by many wise and good men ; nor is there any reason to suppose, that it will be perverted to serve the purposes of vice and immorality. Mr. Winchester, in his defence of it, shews much charity, much humanity, and no little share of learning. The fifth dialogue alone, which relates to the design and tendency of punishment, might furnish some little foundation for a difference of opinion ; but, in a question so greatly above human attainment, the mind would be lost in the inquiry, and not greatly benefited by the discussion. The question of the Universal Restoration, must be examined, as Mr. Winchester has done, by the Word of God, as revealed at different times, and particularly in the Gospel.'

I should do injustice to Mr. Winchester's memory, if I did not transcribe his reasons for publishing his Dialogues, which I take from the Preface of the first edition, page v. in answer to the question, ' Why do you publish such doctrine as this ?'

' 1. That the doctrine itself might not suffer, and be thought ill of, from the false and spurious mediums through which it has appeared, and for want of a more full and proper vindication of it.

' 2. To remove, as far as may be, those bars and obstructions, that have, in some measure, blocked up

up the way, and shut up the minds of many, from so full and fair an inquiry into the Gospel, as it deserves, and as they might otherwise have given it.

‘ 3. To correct the acidity of *Reprobation Leaven*, and to prevent (if possible) those despondencies and dejections of mind, which too frequently arise from a strong and secret suspicion, that Christ died only for the sins of a certain few, excluding all the rest of mankind from any saving benefit by his death.

‘ 4. To harmonize Scripture, and to make it more consistent with itself than it seems to have been yet made; also to conciliate and coalesce contending parties, bringing them hereby nearer to each other in love and affection; and so to that union, peace, and concord, which is most devoutly to be wished for.

‘ 5. To undeceive, and do justice to the English reader, who, when he takes up the inspired volume, is used to affix no other idea to the words *eternal, everlasting, for ever, for ever AND ever*, than a strictly *endless duration*, when either happiness or misery are annexed to them.

‘ 6. To establish and confirm the faith of some, who have seen reason to believe this doctrine, and were simply coming into it; but finding few, as yet, in the full belief of it, and hearing the continual outcries of its adversaries, without being able, at first view, to answer them, they have become weak and wavering

ing about it, and inclined to neglect it, for want of more and sufficient evidence, as they suppose.'

And he adds, 'I would not knowingly deceive, nor be deceived, in a matter of such vast importance; nor yet could I wish mankind to be ignorant of it. I have, therefore,—at the *expence of character and popularity with the religious world*; at the *hazard of temporal interest and emolument, and refusing no other sacrifice*, in what I apprehend to be the cause of God and truth,—come forth, as a writing witness on this subject, and a defender of the faith, which I once destroyed. It was with caution and reluctance I came into this view myself, so that I can bear with others. If conviction operate on them as on me, we will agree to say, the evidence and force of truth *constraineth us*——*Partial* redemption and salvation, under my present views, are *the darkness and eclipse* of the Church of Christ. *Universal Restoration*, (of all lapsed intelligences, for no other I middle with in this defence), *the Sun of Righteousness*, shining in his full strength, and in all his ability to save.'

Mr. Winchester published a second edition of this work before he left Old England, in which he suppressed that part of the fifth dialogue referred to by the *reviewers*. The public have shewn their judgment of this book by quickly taking off both impressions of it entirely: and as it is calculated for general use,
and

and is still much called for, I am *now* bringing out a *third edition*, attended with some critical notes.

II. *The Restitution of all Things Defended*. This is an answer to Mr. Dan Taylor's *Everlasting Punishment asserted, and re-asserted*; and is the best controversial piece that Mr. W. ever published. I think it a pattern of controversial writing: sound criticism, perspicuity of argument, manly boldness, and christian meekness, are all eminently displayed in it. Mr. Taylor, though, confessedly, a gentleman of ability, never made any reply. The work has been out of print these three years. I mean soon to reprint it, with an additional view of the *aions*, or *ages*, in their *beginning, succession, and ending*.

III. *Lectures on the Prophecies that remain to be fulfilled*. Four volumes octavo. This is a work of great labour and utility. The learned Bishop Newton's *Dissertations on the Prophecies that have been fulfilled*, with the above of M. Winchester, give the most connected and clear view of prophecy, that is to be found in the English language. Every Student in Divinity, and every Christian, who wishes to understand the prophecies, ought to be possessed of these two grand publications. The fulfilment of prophecy, is a *growing evidence* of the truth of revelation, and ought to be much attended to in the present *Age of Infidelity*. I never met with a Deist in my life who had investigated this subject, and I am fully persuaded that no man, who has closely studied

the point, can resist its evidence. Mr. W. was eminently qualified to write on this theme; his comprehensive understanding, his strength of memory, his rapidity of thought, his extensive knowledge, and his indefatigable industry, have, in this work, raised a monument to the cause of truth, which will last for ever. Among many other interesting subjects, the Lectures treat on the return of the Jews to their own land before their conversion to Christianity—their miserable condition at the coming of Christ, and their conversion on his personal appearance—The first resurrection, as the peculiar portion of God's first-born—The binding of Satan, and consequent peace and glory of the *millennial age*, under the personal reign of Christ and his Saints—The dignity, holiness, and happiness, of the Jewish nation in that age, the end of that age, and loosing of Satan, with the general resurrection and judgment—The conflagration of the earth, and awful punishment of the wicked—The creation of the new heaven and earth—And the *final Restitution of all Things*.

This is the largest work that Mr. W. ever wrote, and, in one respect, the most useful, as it contains the greatest fund of scripture knowledge. It may be proper to remark here, that Mr. W. laid it down as an invariable canon of interpreting scripture, *never to depart from the literal sense of it*, unless the context, or the nature of the subject, made it necessary so to do. By an observance of this plain and rational

tional rule, it was, that he represented that beauty, harmony, and clearness of the sacred pages, which appear so eminently in his Lectures. A second edition of the first, second, and fourth volumes, had taken place, and he was on the point of republishing the third volume when he left this country; but as that untoward circumstance prevented him, it has never yet been done, though I have hopes of accomplishing it in the course of another year.

IV. *Revelation Defended*, in ten letters to Mr. T. Paine, in answer to his first part of the *Age of Reason*. As Mr. P. purposed to shew the fallacy of the Bible, from the Bible itself; so Mr. W. has shewn the truth of the Bible, from its own contents. This, as we have before mentioned, was first published in America; I republished it in London, in the beginning of the year 1796. While good sense is preferred to the flippancy of profane wit; solid argument to unproved assertion; manly modesty to low scurrility; and the words of truth and soberness to empty bombast; so long will this work be preferred before that which it opposes.

V. *The Process and Empire of Christ, an Heroic Poem, in twelve Books*, published in one volume octavo, 1793. This was Mr. W's. favourite work, which he prized more than any other. I once heard him say, that whatever became of his other works, he hoped that this would remain till the second coming of Christ. The contents of this book fully

answer to its title. The *process* of Christ is described, from his birth to the restoration of all things, and his giving up the kingdom to the Father. An intimate knowledge of the scriptures—a supreme love to God—a fervent zeal for Christ—and unbounded good will towards men, are prominent features of the work; and I think it contains the best *body of scripture divinity* which I ever read; but, as a Poem, it does not deserve a name.

VI. *A Political Catechism*. This was mentioned before, I had not then read it, but have since. It is well calculated to impress the minds of the American youth with a sense of the value of their civil and religious liberties, and of the importance of their country in a political and commercial view. It has never been published in England.

Besides the above, Mr. W. published a considerable number of single sermons and tracts, a few of which deserve particular notice.

VII. *The Gospel preached by the Apostles, especially St. Paul*. In this he shews that the leading doctrines of Calvinism and Arminianism are both scriptural; that they do not contradict each other; that the union of both, so far as they are scriptural, naturally includes the restoration of all things. This book has had a great run, and is much called for now.

VIII. *The Lord Jesus Christ worthy of the Love of all Men*. The character of Christ is beautifully exhibited,

bited, and affectionately recommended in this piece.

IX. *An Oration on the Discovery of America, with a Plan and Description of the City of Washington, and a Sketch of the Life and Character of General Washington.* There have been two editions. It is now out of print.

X. *Philadelphian Magazine*, two vols. 8vo. These contain a variety of pious and entertaining matter.

XI. *Two Sermons on the Woe Trumpets*, Rev. xi. 14. This contains the *Signs of the present Times*. I once heard Dr. Priestley say, that these sermons had given him more knowledge of the present times, than all the books which he had ever read upon that subject. The Dr. also recommends them in a note to the last sermon which he published before he retired to America. There have been two editions.

XII. *The Doctrine of Atonement defended.*

XIII. *Five Letters on the Divinity of Christ.* These were first published in America, and re-printed in England in the *Philadelphian Magazine*. The friends of the doctrine which these letters maintain, have thought them unanswerable.

XIV. *The Face of Moses Unveiled.* A striking and rational exposition of some of the leading Jewish types. Two editions.

XV. *The Outcasts Comforted.* The dedication prefixed to the *third edition* will sufficiently characterize it.

To

To all those of every denomination, who have been, or may be, rejected by their brethren, for the belief of the glorious doctrine of the Restoration of ALL Things, (of which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began) and especially to *William Vidler*, and the *Baptist Church at Battle*, in *Sussex*, the third edition of this Discourse is humbly inscribed, by their friend and servant, for the Lord's sake,

THE AUTHOR,
1793.

XVI. *A Letter to Mr. De Coetlegon*, occasioned by his re-publishing the late President Edward's sermon on *Eternal Misery*. Mr. De Coetlegon never answered it.

XVII. *Funeral Sermon for Mr. John Wesley*, with an Elegy on his death.

XIX. *Works and Words of Jesus*. An excellent piece. Out of print.

XX. *Seed of the Woman bruising the Serpent's Head*—*The Gospel of Christ no cause of Shame*—*A Serious Address to Youth on the worth of the Soul*—*Funeral Sermon for Israel Johnson*—*Sermon on the Slave Trade*—*Century Sermon*—*Holy Conversation of Christians*—*Comfort for Mourning Christians*—*Beauties of the Millennium*—*Sermon to Youth*—*An Hymn Book, &c. &c.* Several of these are out of print.

When Mr. W. published his Lectures, he sent a copy

copy of them to his countryman, General Washington. I saw a polite and friendly letter from that *great man*, to Mr. W. acknowledging the receipt of them, and wishing him every blessing in his labours as a minister of the gospel of Christ.

Benjamin Rush, M. D. well known in America for his medical abilities and general scientific knowledge, has given some thoughts in the two following letters to Mr. W. which ought to be preserved.

Philadelphia, May 11, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

I SIT down with great pleasure to thank you for the instruction I have derived, from reading your Lectures on the Prophecies.

You have made the Old and New Testaments intelligible books, and added greatly to our obligations to love and admire them.

To pry into the meaning of the prophecies is certainly a *duty*. Our Saviour condemns his disciples for being slow of heart in believing all that the scriptures have said concerning him; and commends Abraham for beholding his day afar off, and rejoicing in the great events which were to follow it.

Perhaps a great part of the errors in principle, and lukewarmness in practice, of all sects of Christians, arise chiefly from their ignorance of the literal meaning and extent of the prophecies which relate to the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Go on, my dear Sir, in your researches. As the
best

best Natural Philosophers are those who examine the works of nature most minutely ; so they are the best Divines who search and compare the scriptures most carefully. Your works are beyond the present state of knowledge in our world, but the time *must* come, when they will rise into universal estimation, and bear down all the modern systems of our schools. They are founded on a rock, and the more reason and religion prevail in the world, the more their beauty, symmetry, and sublimity will be seen and admired. He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, we are all alike prone to Jewish infidelity. We condemn the Jews for looking for a temporal deliverer when our Saviour came into the world. We act their folly over again in looking for a (mere) spiritual instead of a temporal kingdom in the Millennium.

The Universal Doctrine prevails more and more in our country, particularly among persons eminent for their piety, in whom it is not a mere speculation, but a new principle of action in the heart, prompting to practical godliness. — — — — — Your account of the *Restoration of Sacrifices after* the coming of our Saviour, is the only part of your lectures that I object to. I suspect they ought to have been placed a short time *before* the commencement of his personal government. Perhaps you may re-consider this subject in the next edition of them.

Adieu, from dear Sir, yours sincerely,

BENJAMIN RUSH.

Philadelphia, November 12, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

ACCEPT of my thanks for your long letter by the *Pigou*, and your valuable publications which accompanied it. Your Letters to *Mr. Taylor* contain many new and striking ideas. Your Funeral Sermon for *Mr. John Wesley* does honour to the philanthropy of your universal principles. I admire and honour that great man above any man that has lived since the time of the Apostles: his writings will ere long revive in support of our doctrine—for if Christ died for *all*, as *Mr. Wesley* always taught, it will soon appear a necessary consequence that *all* shall be saved. But what shall I say to your fourth volume of Lectures on the Prophecies? Accept of my thanks over and over, for the instruction and entertainment I have derived from reading them. They are now in the hands of my dear friend, and old preceptor in medicine, *Dr. Redman*, who speaks in the highest terms of them, and calls you our *Theological Newton*. Go on, my dear Sir, with your researches into the true meaning of the Scriptures. Your works, however much neglected or opposed now, will be precious to those generations which are to follow us: and, like the bones of *Elisha*, will perform miracles after your death. How delightful to a good man should be the thoughts of surviving himself! The persons who are to exist an hundred years hence are as much our fellow-creatures as those who are our contemporaries.

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It only requires more grace to love them than the persons whom we see and converse with every day ; but in proportion as we attain to this sublime act of love, we approach nearer to the Source of all Love—for he loves, and serves all the generations of his creatures with an equal affection.

I contemplate with you the progress of reason and liberty in Europe with great pleasure. * Republican forms of government are the best repositories of the Gospel : I therefore suppose they are intended as preludes to a glorious manifestation of its power and influence upon the hearts of men. The language of these free and equal governments seems to be like that of John the Baptist of old, " Prepare ye the way of the Lord—make his paths straight." The benevolent spirit which has lately appeared in the world, in its governments—in its numerous philanthropic and humane societies—and even in public entertainments, remind me of the first efforts of a child to move its body or limbs. These efforts are strong, but irregular, and often in a contrary direction to that which is intended. Time and a few unsuccessful experiments soon bring these motions into a proper direction. The same will happen, I have no doubt, to the present kind, but irregular and convulsive impulses of the human heart. At present

* When the Doctor wrote this, the horrible anarchy produced by French principles had not been experienced, as it has since.—
Editor.

they

they lead men to admire and celebrate human lights, and human deliverers, — — — — — but ere long, public admiration and praise will rise to him who is the true light of the world, and who only delivers from evils of *every kind*. At present we wish liberty to the whole world—But the next touch of the celestial magnet upon the human heart will direct it into wishes for the *salvation of all mankind*.

Your's sincerely,

BENJAMIN RUSH.

With regard to the restoration of sacrifices in the Millenium, which Dr. Rush thinks ought to have been placed a little before the beginning of that glorious period, Mr. Winchester never altered his opinion. This idea is very contrary to the universal sentiment of Christian writers upon that subject. His eighteenth Lecture on the Prophecies, volume the second, expressly treats upon it, and is entitled, "*The Restoration of Sacrifices: proved from the Prophecies, and accounted for; and shewn to be consistent with the most exalted state of Christianity.*"—"Many," says he, "may think it difficult to prove that animals will be slain, and offered to God during the Millenium, and to shew the designs of such an institution and its consistency with that dispensation of the Gospel, which shall then take place in the world.

"But difficult as this task may seem, the rule which I have followed hitherto will easily conduct me

through it, viz. to take the Prophecies in their most literal sense, where that sense involves no absurdity ; and I think none can be pretended here.

“ Several of the Prophets intimate that sacrifices shall be offered to the Lord at that time, as Isaiah, chap. lvi. 7, lx. 7, lxvi. 20, 21. There is also a passage in the Prophecy of Jeremiah, chap. xxxiii. 17—22, that plainly implies the restoration of sacrifices and burnt offerings.

“ For thus saith Jehovah, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the House of Israel : neither shall the Priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. And the word of Jehovah came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne ; and with the Levites and Priests, my ministers. As the hosts of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured ; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

“ Here observe, (1) There is an express declaration that the Priests and the Levites shall continue while day and night shall last. (2) As the Priests and Levites shall remain under the government of
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the Messiah, it follows, that of necessity they must have something to offer; and we are told, that their business shall be to minister before Jehovah, and to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. (3) That they shall be increased in number like the host of heaven, and like the sand on the sea-shore: expressions that are frequently used to intimate an immense multitude. (4) These promises shall begin to be fulfilled in the time of our Saviour's reign, when he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land; when Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely. And they shall remain in force till the great conflagration.

“ Now all these things are quite easy to be understood, if we believe that they yet remain to be fulfilled. But if we would attempt to accommodate these grand predictions to past events, we shall find innumerable difficulties on every side. For instance, Is there any similarity between God's covenant of the day and night, and his covenant with the Priests and Levites, upon the supposition that the latter has failed for many ages, and will never be renewed more ?”

I have inserted the above only as a sample of the manner in which Mr. W. treats the subject. But he resists the great proofs of it upon the nine last chapters of Ezekiel, which he contends are to be taken literally, and are yet to be fulfilled.

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The ancient doctrine of the *Millennium*, or thousand years reign of Christ with his saints upon earth, has of late years been revived, and has met with many learned and able advocates ; as Mr. Joseph Mede, Dr. T. Burnett, Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bristol, Dr. Gill, Dr. Hartley, Dr. Chauncy, and many others. Its advocates differ greatly ; some of them suppose that there will be only a great revival of the cause of Christianity upon earth for a thousand years, during which Christ will be known, owned, and obeyed by all nations ; others, that he will reign personally with his saints a thousand years, and this will not be on the present, but on the *new* earth. M. W. embraced the millennial doctrine, but differed in his statement of it from either of the above views. He supposed that great wars and overturning of thrones and nations would precede the return of the bulk of the Jewish people to their own land ; that some few years after their re-settlement in Canaan, and when they were grown rich by commerce and agriculture, they would be brought into the greatest distress by some foreign enemy ; that in the height of their calamity, Christ would personally appear and save them ; that the nation would then be converted and collected together ; that Satan would be bound a thousand years ; the first resurrection would take place ; the obstinately wicked be destroyed throughout the earth ; that Christ would reign in his holy house of the mountain in Judea with his risen first-born saints ;
that

that the Jews would be an holy, glorious, happy people, and great instruments of converting the world, which for a thousand years would be blessed with peace, righteousness, joy, and love, and be fully inhabited with men; that this happy period would be followed with the loosing of Satan from his prison, and with a great defection from Christ among mankind; that the wicked would be destroyed; the general resurrection and judgment would follow. The earth, as the place of punishment for the wicked, would be melted by a general conflagration, and become the lake of fire and brimstone; that punishment would endure to the age of ages, when every knee having bowed to Christ, and every tongue having confessed his name, all would be reconciled to the Father by the blood of the Cross. Then the new heavens and the new earth would be formed, the curse of sin be done away, the kingdom of the Son given up to the Father, and God would be all in all.

Those who wish for farther information upon these subjects may consult his Lectures upon the Prophecies.

* The leading feature of Mr. W's writings and preaching was *good will towards men*. In this he was eminent, both living and dying. He had the

* About forty Sermons, which Mr. W. delivered upon select subjects, were taken in short-hand by T. A. TEULON, and are now publishing.

happiness

happiness of communicating the same disposition to some thousands of persons, both in England and America, among whom his memory will be long precious. And while fierce and angry bigots condemn him to endless damnation, we rejoice in believing that he sleeps in Jesus; that he will escape the second death, and have part in the first resurrection.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 34, line 22, after that, read *he*.
 — 99, — 2, from bottom, *not*, dele.